

Your guide to the skiing season in China.

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Li Dongli has dedicated all her youth and energy to helping those suffering emotional pain.

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Is cross talk dying out? Cross talk master Ma Sanli has given an answer in his farewell performance on December 8.

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Olympic Organizing Committee Launched

By Shan Jinliang

The inaugural ceremony of the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) was held at the Great Hall of the People yesterday. Mayor Liu Qi was elected president.

At the same time, a committee was established to supervise the organizing committee. Dr Jacques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), sent congratulations saying the IOC will provide full assistance and cooperation to the Beijing Olympics.

"All those on the committee must speak at least one foreign language," said Liu. An English test is a must for all applicants, revealed an organizing committee official. Recruitment is ongoing and the committee staff will be enlarged to 5,000.



Photo by Su Guanming

China Publishes WTO Documents

By Shan Jinliang

With entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Tuesday, Beijingers can at last gain access to the detailed terms of the agreement – in English.

"Compilation of the Legal Instruments on China's Accession to the World Trade Organization" was issued in English on the "China and WTO" column of www.moftec.gov.cn, the China's official website of MOFTEC (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation) on December 10.

The legal documents detailing the final agreement were published this week when MOFTEC decided to share the regulations with the Chinese people.

MOFTEC owns the rights to the Chinese translation. That translation will eventually be published at an unspecified date by the People's Publishing House while the Chinese-English version will be published by the Law Press China, said an un-named MOFTEC official. In any case, the Chinese version is invalid in settling legal disputes, the official explained.

He added the high need for accuracy in translation had delayed release of the Chinese language version after receipt from WTO headquarters on November 23.

China to Cut Tariffs

China is to cut the average level of import tariffs from 15.3 to 12 percent by the end of 2002, the Ministry of Finance announced on Tuesday.

The reduction of tariffs will begin January 1, 2002. The Chinese government has decided to lower the tariff rates of 5,300 items in 2002, accounting for 73 percent of total tariffs. According to the Tariff Policy Commission of the State Council:

- the average tariff for industrial products will be lowered to 11.6 percent
 - the average tariff for agricultural products excluding aquatic products will be lowered to 15.8 percent
 - the average tariff for aquatic products will be lowered to 14.3 percent
 - among imported industrial products, the average tariff for crude and refined oil will be lowered to 6.1 percent
 - timber, paper and paper product tariffs will be lowered to 8.9 percent
 - textile and garments tariffs will be lowered to 17.6 percent
 - chemical products tariffs will be lowered to 7.9 percent
 - transport vehicles tariffs will be lowered to 17.4 percent
 - machinery tariffs will be lowered to 9.6 percent
 - electronic products tariffs will be lowered to 10.7 percent
 - There will be a reduction of more than 25 percent in the average tariff of aquatic products, oil, timber, paper, paper products, chemical products, transport vehicles, machinery and electronic products.
- (Xinhua)

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The Longest Day



Changhong Qiao, East Third Ring Road

Photo by Jackey

Historic gridlock grips frozen city

By Shan Jinliang

The next millimeter is due on Tuesday.

It took just 10 millimeters by 10 pm to stop the capital city dead on Friday, the day the Beijing media dubbed "December 7 Gridlock" or "the biggest car exhibition in Beijing history," as one Internet wag later put it.

Beijing Meteorological Observatory (BMO) had not predicted it, catching the whole city off guard.

"I did not do a good job," said bureau director Yun Yaonan.

Miss Yang, a meteorologist at the Beijing Meteorological Observatory, said there will be another 1 millimeter of snow in the south of the city on Tuesday or Wednesday next week.

But upon further questioning, she refused to give her full name and asked *Beijing Today* to call back the chief meteorologist Sun Jisong for further information. Upon being called, Sun refused to predict the next snowfall.

Slip sliding

It began 1pm on Friday, "a typical light snow", said Zhang Mingyin, a Beijing Meteorological Observatory official. The highest temperature on the road surface was -1 degree Centigrade, converting snow to ice almost the instant the first wheel rolled over it.

More than 50 patients, mostly with fractures, were admitted to Jishuitan Hospital in Xicheng District. Road gritting did not start until 6 pm, said Lu Zhiping, who works for a city street cleaning company responsible for the ring roads. Cars, buses and minibuses became stuck to the road. Roads resembled ice rinks glinting in the 6 pm streetlight, and it was around this time most commuters began their long, long journeys home.

Most commuters spent 3-5 times longer than usual reaching their destination. By 8pm, Third Ring Road

traffic was backed up thousands of meters. Some cars averaged a meter every 10 minutes.

Bus drivers tried and failed to climb the steep flyover at Dongzhimen in east Beijing. But despite police efforts with straw cushions, wheels were spinning like windmills all across the city.

A Beijing Public Transportation Company official said the company extended its regular bus operations by six hours on Friday night. And the passengers who got off the bus to try for a taxi perhaps made the biggest mistake of all that night.

The chaos came about from a combination of causes, said a Beijing Public Security Bureau of Traffic Administration official. First, the timing: snow came at peak commute for the weekend. Second, the growth in motor vehicle ownership. Third, the ice-covered flyovers and road junctions.

Action faster than words

More snow fell at 11 pm on Tuesday. At that time, most Beijingers were safely tucked up in bed, according to official statistics. Relevant departments all made relevant promises to be better prepared when the next snowstorm strikes.

"Forty street cleaning vehicles are ready for action, and environment-friendly grit of 400 tons has been prepared," said Lu Zhiping, an official from Beijing Cleaning Group. There will be special routes in the Chang'an thoroughfare and the ring roads for the snow sweepers to go, said Lu. At the same time, they will try to contact the BMO for the latest weather information.

All the city traffic police will be ready for any emergency, said the city's traffic administrative departments on Monday. Dregs will also be used to assist in the operation. The Beijing Traffic Radio will be well prepared for live weather and traffic broadcasts.



Traffic police work overtime on Friday night

Photo by Gong Bing



Passengers cram onto the Ganluyuan-Dongbeiwang route

Photo by Xu Jingxing - Newsphoto



The busy Beijing-Tianjin-Tanggu Expressway

Photo by Iceberg

‘Test-tube-baby’ Technology Approved with Conditions

By Xiao Rong

Six medical institutions in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces and Chongqing Municipality were approved for the first time by the Ministry of Public Health (MPH) last Wednesday to develop human assisted reproductive technology (HART), and establish human sperm banks.

The approval comes after a

strict inspection system on HART and human sperm bank technology (HSBT), which was announced by MPH this August.

The Ministry issued two regulations on the management of HART and HSBT services in February this year, as well as a series of inspecting and granting procedures.

No organizations or individuals

will be allowed to provide HART or HSBT services without permits from the central and provincial health administrations, according to the inspection system.

“The market must be regulated. Otherwise the technology could be abused and the market may grow out of control, causing many social, ethical and legal problems,” said Yu Xiucheng, a science and tech-

nology official in the MPH.

A recent survey by the MPH showed that there are 44 human sperm banks and a total of 400 to 500 institutions conducting HART in China, most of which are located in the eastern coastal areas and developed areas.

HART is also known as “Test-tube-baby” technology, referring to the scientific manipulation of

sperm, zygotes and embryos to produce impregnation. Sources from MPH indicate that about one million Chinese couples want to try HART services at present and the figure is expected to go up in the future.

Chinese doctors conducted the first successful artificial insemination in 1982 and the first test-tube baby was born in Beijing in 1988.

Interest Rate to Remain Stable

China’s financial authorities have no immediate plans to cut the interest rate of the renminbi, said Dai Xianglong, governor of the People’s Bank of China on Monday.

The announcement was made in response to rumors that the country is considering an interest rate cut to inflate its sagging economic growth. “We believe the rates are at an appropriate level at present,” Dai said.

Supporters of a renminbi rate cut said it was necessary to ensure firms continue to invest, and that consumers continue to consume.

China’s economic growth slid from 8.1% to 7.6% during the first three quarters of this year and needs a shot in the arm to stay healthy.

The supporters’ voices grew louder when the U.S. dollar interest rate fell below that of the renminbi in October.

But Dai said interest rate policies on national and foreign currencies are not linked. “Our interest rates for foreign currencies follow those on the international markets, but the interest fluctuations of the renminbi are decided according to our needs in macroeconomic adjustment and control.”

The US dollar one-year time deposit rate at Chinese banks now stands at 1.25%, while the rate for the renminbi is 2.25%.

(Xinhua)

New Foreign Ministry Spokesman Appointed

By Xiao Rong

Kong Quan, the new director of the Information Department of China’s Foreign Ministry (FM), will appear as FM spokesman next January.

Kong made his debut Monday evening at the Ministry’s new year reception which was held for foreign embassy press officials and Chinese and foreign journalists.

Former director of the Information Department Zhu Bangzao bid farewell to the guests and introduced the new director Kong Quan.

Kong Quan extended a welcoming speech, hoping to receive further support from the guests.

Born in South China’s Guangdong province, Kong Quan has learnt French since childhood and has been to Belgium for study. During his work in FM, he stayed in Europe for a long time, acting as the diplomat in the Chinese Embassy to Belgium and France, according to China News Service.

Kong Quan was vice director of the Department of West European Affairs before taking over as director of the Information Department.

Zhu Bangzao will be appointed as China’s ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia, according to China News Service.

Diamond Tariffs to be Lifted

By Xiao Rong

Tariffs on diamond imports will be abolished from January 1, 2002 for diamonds declared at the customs of Shanghai Diamond Exchange.

The import duties of diamonds will be cut from 3% to zero while the consumption tax, which was formally collected at the import and processing stage, will be postponed until the retailing stage at a reduced rate of 5% from the former 10%, according to Fang Xiong, deputy chairman of Shanghai Diamond Exchange Administration Office.

The 17% value-added tax will remain the same after the adjustment, however. And the tariff for rough diamonds will go down to 17% from the current 33.9%, while the tariff for polished diamonds will be reduced from 41.7% to 17%.

“We hope the new taxation policy conforming with international practice can act as an impetus for the overall development of the diamond market,” said Fang.

APIEL to Challenge TOEFL

By Xiao Rong

A new English qualification test titled Advanced Placement International English Language (APIEL) has become a hot topic this week for Chinese students who wish to pursue university study in English speaking countries.

Jointly introduced by the U.S. College Board and Educational Testing Service (ETS), APIEL is expected to make its debut on May 10, 2002, according to Dr. Theresa Chang-wei Jen, Associate Director of International Service of the U.S. College Board.

However, an official from the Testing Center of China’s Ministry of Education said APIEL will not enter China as soon as that, for academic cooperation requires grants from the relevant administrative departments of both countries.

Yet two leading English training institutions in China have expressed concern about the imminent APIEL.

“We will promote new training programs aiming at APIEL once it is approved to come to China,” said Ms. Gui of Shanghai Qianjin Foreign Language School.

New Oriental School, another famous English language training institution in China, also stated that they would quickly and efficiently develop a high-quality APIEL exam training program once its introduction to China was confirmed.

“Due to the recent impact of IELTS to TOEFL, ETS has decided to reform by developing APIEL, which improves a lot on speaking and writing ability compared to TOEFL. So the promotion of APIEL can be seen as a kind of propaganda strategy by ETS to compete with IELTS,” Jiang Bo, general supervisor of New Oriental School told the Beijing Today reporter.

However, Jiang said TOEFL will still play a dominant role in China’s exam market in the next five years as APIEL waits to be further developed as an emergent examining system.

“Whether TOEFL or APIEL, it’s just a matter of choice for students and enrolling universities. What matters most is that examinees can benefit from an exam system by developing real communication skills in English,” Jiang added.



One of the ubiquitous advertisements for TOEFL in University campus
Photo by Qu Liyan

Postal Donations Questioned by Beijingers

By Xiao Rong

Raising donations through the post has been questioned by some Beijingers who called Beijing Youth Daily recently for further investigation.

The letters were from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), asking recipients to donate money for children of poor regions for hepatitis vaccination. Attached were a showing letter, a feedback table and a money order from the Post Office.

People who received these letters, though glad to help those poor children, were afraid at the same time that the letter may have been faked under the name of UNICEF, for although the letters had a Shanghai postmark, the senders’ addresses were all from Beijing.

Mr. Charles from the China Representative Office of UNICEF confirmed the practice, explaining that it was only a preliminary test run of a postal donation program that will be organized by UNICEF.

As a non-profit welfare organization, UNICEF has been approved by the State Council to launch donation activities in China, according to Mr. Charles.

“Postal donation has been very popular outside China, but the response rate is rather low in

developed countries due to the abuse of junk mail. We just want to prove whether it will work in China,” said Charles.

A total of 100,000 letters have been sent to Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou by some business consulting companies entrusted by UNICEF. 55 people have sent back their donations by way of mailing, remit and credit cards, most of which were from Beijing.



UNICEF official shows the letters to the reporter
Photo by Qu Liyan



Customers watch the live broadcast of the hearing

Photo by Yan Xiaoming

Price Hearing in Live Broadcasting Debut

By Xiao Rong

The 2002 Spring Festival Period Road Passenger Transport Price Hearing of Guangdong province was broadcast live by China Central Television (CCTV) last Saturday, the first time a regional price hearing in China has been aired on national television.

The price meeting has aroused nationwide attention, despite being regional, since Guangdong is one of China’s largest labor force markets. And the Spring Festival is the time for reunion in China, so thousands of workers in Guangdong are eager to return to their homes.

Each year during the Spring Festival, 50 million people are on the move on Guangdong’s roads, with the figure likely to reach 60 million in 2002.

The hearing focused mainly on the validity of the rise in price for road transport in Guangdong, the appropriate increase rate, customer rights to information regarding the true operating capital and big profits of transportation enterprises and the possibility of introducing other ways apart from price rising to strengthen transport capabilities.

Sponsored by Guangdong Commodity Price Bureau (GCPB), the hearing has invited 33 representatives ranging from customers, transportation operators, governmental and social organizations and experts in law and economics.

GCPB is to collect the records of the hearing in a week and will issue the final decision on price increase by the end of this month.

More reasonable hearing procedure underway

Although the hearing has proved to be a success, Ma Huaide, professor from China University of Politics and Law, still appealed the Administrative Procedure Law to be set up soon in China.

“A judicial procedure of the hearing should be established. To achieve this, the objectivity of the sponsor, the professional investigation before the hearing, and the real adoption by the policy-making government departments of those suggestions all need to be improved,” Professor Ma told the Beijing Today reporter.

Qiu Jianguo from China Consumer’s Association also talked about the necessity to guarantee the independence and justice of the sponsor. “The operating enterprises and its leading organizations should act as the applicant of the hearing instead of being the sponsor. And those top governmental organizations that are directly in charge of commodity prices must remain independent and fair as the sponsor.”

Who are the appropriate representatives?

“The representative should be the parties directly concerned with the hearing instead of unrelated ones who cannot speak for the interests of both parties,” Ma stated.

He said that careful preparation work must be done before the hearing on the part of the representatives to ensure efficiency. “An independent medium is needed to inspect the accuracy of the investigation materials, especially the operating capitals of enterprises,” said Ma.

“According to practices of western countries, certain lawyers will be invited to act as representatives of relevant parties, which can present a more professional performance,” said Ma.

Qiu Jianguo took the view that the representatives of consumers should be recommended by the Consumer’s Association to truly represent the benefits of the majority. “The choosing of appropriate representatives of consumers can no doubt lead to the protection of the legitimate consumers’ rights,” Qiu said.

Media to promote the hearing system

Professor Ma emphasized that media participation can help ensure the hearing remain open and just. “Exaggeration should be avoided, but the problem is rather that there has not been enough media intervention in China.”

Wu Guangqiu, producer of the broadcast from CCTV, expressed his satisfaction towards the program and the positive response from audiences.

“The price hearing system tends to be more public and democratic, which can be shown from the entire cooperation of SDPC and Guangdong provincial government during the production of the program,” said Wu.

But Wu promised to disclose those price hearings that have proved to be mere formalities.

When asked about the comments on the live broadcast of the hearing, an official from the Civil Aviation Administration of China told the reporter that they had no plan for a passenger ticket price increase up till now. But a price hearing would be held if there were such plan for the Spring Festival, he said.

Right after the live broadcast, the Ministry of Railways asked for the tape of the program from CCTV through private channels. As to the railway ticket price increase, which is routine for each Spring Festival, and the possibility of holding a similar price hearing, the Ministry refused to disclose any details.

SDPC also announced Wednesday that the price hearing is a must for any planned price increase in road passenger transport in China.

A price inspection system was first established in 1993 in Shenzhen of South China’s Guangdong province, demanding that the government should solicit opinions from consumers, operators and experts for the price of those commodities and services that are closely related with ordinary life.

“The Price Law of PRC”, which was promulgated in 1998, first legitimizes the price hearing system in China.

On August 1, 2001, a provisional regulation on the hearing of governmental price policy-making was announced by the State Development Planning Commission (SDPC).

A new price hearing list was also published by SDPC on November 23, 2001, stipulating that a price hearing sponsored by SDPC is required for the formulation of electricity fees, railway and civil aviation passenger transport ticket prices, and telecom charges.

Microsoft Plans to Stay

By Zhao Yijiang

Microsoft will stay in Zhongguancun, China's 'Silicon Valley', for at least another half year, revealed Microsoft China's vice-president Liu Bizuo on December 9. Microsoft has extended their rental contract with Xigema Buildings for another six months.

Recent media reports had speculated that Microsoft would leave Zhongguancun in the near future, since the business environment and infrastructure are too limited. The software colossus at present has to hold its press conferences at the World Trade Center, on the other side of town.

Liu denied that Microsoft had already decided to move out however. He confirmed they had been looking for a new site recently as the current office space was not able to accommodate more than 500 people. As for the business environment, Liu considers the traffic conditions and office building standards to have improved dramatically, compared to four years ago.

"It is purely a commercial action to choose a new office: what we care about is the rent, capacity and quality of the new building," Liu added.

PDA OS Interloper

Penbex Challenges Microsoft

By Yang Xiao

To challenge Microsoft is a tough job. Everyone fails including Netscape, Wu Shihong and American Justice Nevertheless, new challengers still gather at the castle of Microsoft. Penbex is one such example.

This Wednesday Penbex called in a dozen Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) manufacturers in Beijing to hold the 2002 PDA Trend Forum. The general manager Zuo Yongning believes, "Although the Chinese PDA market is getting weaker and weaker, PDAs with Penbex Operating System (OS) can achieve a 30% growth in 2002."

Penbex is a small hi-tech company in Taiwan. It was founded in 1998 and specializes in OS software and platforms. Since OS is the core technology in PDA, Microsoft OS Windows CE holds a key position in the world of PDA as well as in China. But since this year, some manufacturers have changed to Penbex, such as Haier, Founder, TCL. Haier's manager says at the forum that their new product, Xiaochaolong 1100, takes a "more convenient and more functional" Penbex OS.

Intel Holds Digital Creativity Contest

By Zhao Hongji

Fancy creating digital audio and video programs, and three dimension cartoon films by yourself? It's cool!

Intel announced its global "2001-2002 Intel Digital Creativity Competition" recently and Intel China launched this program in Beijing last Friday.

You can log in at www.intelcreate.com, submit your works or bring your vision products, films or photos to the nearly one thousand Intel technical supporting outlets all over China. With the help of Intel's Pentium 4, you can make a multimedia product of your own. Products include private photo albums, family videos, VCDs and digital greeting cards.

By providing all technical support and sponsoring such a competition, Intel aims at further promoting its powerful Pentium 4 around the world. Intel believes its Pentium 4 still has a great potential market to explore before the launch of new chips.

Greencool Denies

By James Young

Gu Chujun, chairman of refrigerant distributor Greencool Technologies Holdings denied talk that he was selling shares in the company and dismissed *Caijing* (finance) Magazine's article which helped send the company's shares down over 34% by the end of Wednesday.

Gu built Greencool on his formula for a super-efficient refrigerant claiming to be ozone-friendly, he said at a news conference in Beijing on Monday to address allegations made by Beijing's *Caijing* Magazine.

Gu's responses

The story by the influential semi-official magazine, published by the China's Stock Exchange Executive Council, questioned the effectiveness of Greencool's main refrigerant product and interviewed a number of customers who said they were dissatisfied with it.

The story, along with rumors that Gu was planning to sell some of his shares revealed by Reuters, helped pound Greencool stock down 19.15% to HK\$2.875 on last Thursday on heavy turnover of HK\$223.5 million shares. The stock fell as low as HK\$2.60. Greencool is one of the brightest stars on Hong Kong's Growth Enterprise Market, and had risen over 90% this year.

Another influence is that the acquisition with Kelon has ceased. *Caijing* says the relevant banks have stopped the loans to Greencool. Greencool arranged an urgent press conference this Monday.

At the conference Gu Chujun appeared to clarify the matter. "Our accounts are under Big5 Arthur Anderson's audit, so we promise there are no faults in annual reports. Our profit comes from the energy savings customers make, when they use our products rather than arising from our 125 projects. The rapid progress of our income and profit is reasonable." Six customers also proved that they use Greencool products well in contrast to *Caijing*'s report. *Caijing* says these companies are not satisfied with Greencool's refrigerant. One company representative He Suming from Zhuhai, Guangdong Prov. says at the conference, "To shift to use Greencool's refrigerant has saved energy. We have decided to keep on using it."

Beijing Today called Greencool's vice general manager Yan Yousong on Tuesday. Yan hopes the Monday conference would change the image of Greencool. He said, "Over 80 media came to our conference. We hope the media could report our company in a positive way. Since *Caijing*'s article contains a lot of mistakes and misunderstandings, we are suffering a '911' attack."

Caijing's opinion

Caijing's article was derived from Guangdong Kelon Electrical Holdings' acquisition. At the end of October, Kelon



Though successful, Gu Chujun is still kept on his toes by the media
Photo by Caijing

announced it would sell the major shares to Greencool.

The article set at least four queries on the efficacy and credit standing of the company.

Caijing investigated the company profile that shows Greencool is the third largest refrigerant distributor in the world after Dupont and ELF Group. It owns 25% of the European market, 10% of the North American market, and 50% of the Asian market. It aims at 99% of the Chinese market next year. The article questions: if the company has such a lot of market shares, why do so few people know about the

Lin Yifu: Biz Titan's Intellect

By Yang Xiao

Lin Yifu, a Taiwanese who sailed across the strait to the mainland in 1999, now enjoys a high status in China.

From Taiwan to Beijing

There is little information about Lin's early life. Some reports from Hong Kong revealed that he was a patriotic captain of the Nationalist Party - KMT. He attended a course of agricultural mechanics at Taiwan University, transferred and acquired a Master's Degree from the Business Management Research Center of Taiwan Political University in 1978. At that time he hoped to keep up with the mainland's drastic reform, and so settled on the mainland in 1979.

He pursued further studies in Peking University.

In 1986 Lin acquired the doctorate at Beijing, then continued with post-doctorate program work in Economic Growth Center under Yale University in 1987.

In that same year he took his family back for China for permanent residence as the first doctor of economics returning from the west since China's initiation of reform and opening up.

In the early 1990s, Lin was admitted to the Faculty of Economics, Chicago University and pursued his doctorate program under the tutorship of Prof. Schulz, a Nobel Prize winner of economics.

After returning home he sponsored the establishment of China Center For Economic Research at Peking University (CCER) 1994.

New center

The CCER aims to mobilize domestic and international resources in order to bring together a group of well-trained economists to make contributions to economic education and research at Peking University.

In 1994, when the center just opened, there were only several classrooms. But seven years later, due to a Taiwan capitalist Wan Zhong donating millions of dollars, the center became a group of old fashioned buildings with advanced CAI



Photo by Chen Shuyi

equipment.

"It is really a good place for research and exchange," Lin Yifu really loves his new decorated center. He told *Beijing Today* in an interview last Wednesday that his "Dream for Red Mansion" was finally realized. The dream took root in this center.

Rich friends

The center quickly became a gregarious party venue for economists and business titans. At the opening ceremony the guests included China's richest man who owns \$1 billion, Liu Yonghao, TV host and a satellite-TV boss Yang Lan, former gymnastics athlete and garment provider Li Ning, and real estate leader Feng Lun and other scores of millionaires.

This is a great opportunity to photographers, because most of them are rarely seen in the same place and time. Lin explained, "They are all my friends for no particular reason. We think it an uncommon opportunity for all of us. Businessmen need advise, especially regarding possible changes in governmental policies. It will influence their companies."

"On the other hand I need to find specific business case matter for my future research topics. So we will go on holding such gatherings."

New direction of research

Lin is so busy. He has just come back from Hong Kong, but in one or two weeks has to take another trip.

During the one hour interview Lin discussed almost every popular topic on Chinese economics, from macro to micro levels. He said, "I believe any economist has a way of making analysis. So at each topic I have my persistent view. I will do my research with the view." Within one or two years he is aiming to set up self-running enterprises in developing countries.

"Now Chinese economists have a lot of topics to research compared with developed countries like the US because China is undergoing a furious pace of reform. So economists will hold an important role in the future."

'Hidden Discount' Waits to Come out

By Sun Zhen

Advertisements for air ticket discounts have been splashed across some Beijing newspapers recently.

An air ticket from Beijing to Shanghai usually priced at 1,040 yuan can now be purchased for 670 yuan, a 35% discount. When asked whether the discount was permitted by the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), a ticket agent replied, "This kind of ticket discount is an open secret and it seems that CAAC has no effective way to resolve it."

'Hidden discount'

"Hidden discounts" occurred when tickets are sold below the official price, although the original price remains printed on the ticket. "Hidden discounts" on air tickets have become a hot issue over the last couple of years. Disregarding the repeated discount bans of CAAC, some regional airlines still sell discounted tickets stealthily in order to win price wars. Such action seriously disturbs market order, while also stimulating corruption.

On the one hand, under the strict supervision of CAAC, small airlines have to adopt hidden discounts to make the price on the ticket lawful. So the difference between the price on the ticket and the actual price makes the real income of airlines far less than their ostensible income. But these airlines must hand in the construction funds of civil aviation, sales tax and other taxes according to their ostensible income, which adds a heavy burden to the shoulders of these already sluggish airlines.

On the other hand, some passengers make a profit from the price gap when

company?

Secondly the chairman Gu Chujun has two versions of biology. One source from the company said he is an inventor for the refrigerant since late 1990s. The other said he is just a businessman who sold "Xiaokang" air-conditioner that was banned by the government for its inferior quality.

Thirdly experts say Gu's formula for his refrigerant is just a copy from Laurence Formula.

The most important is the profit matter. Greencool makes a miracle. In 1998 the income was 110,000 yuan. But two years later its income increased 3300 fold at 364 million yuan. *Caijing* calculates the company's total 125 refrigerant projects only create 13 million yuan.

Acquisition funding questioned

Analysts said the market was rife with talk that Gu needed to sell shares to raise funds to complete his private \$67 million purchase of a 20.64% controlling stake in Chinese refrigerator and air conditioner maker Kelon.

The move will allow Greencool to tap the distribution power of one of China's best-known appliance makers. Gu will become chairman of Kelon.

Gu said he has already deposited 100 million yuan and has made arrangements to provide the rest of the 560 million yuan purchase price, without disclosing the source of the funds. "In the short term I will not sell my personal stake in Greencool," he told analysts in a recording of the call monitored by Reuters.

Sun Hung Kai Research analyst Odelia Leung said she believes that Gu will successfully disprove his critics about the efficacy of the Greencool refrigerants, but remains concerned about a share sale.

"I'm not so worried about its product quality, but whether Gu will sell shares to finance his acquisition is another matter," she said.

Nonetheless, Leung said she is maintaining a buy recommendation on Greencool shares, adding that the drop presents an opportunity to pick up shares more cheaply. She said she believed that the company's business model was sound. Most of the company's revenues come from replacement of refrigerants for corporate customers in exchange for a portion of the electricity savings generated by the new product.

The refrigerants are actually produced by a private company owned by Gu in China, then distributed by Greencool.

This Wednesday the share price for Greencool dropped to HK\$2.30.



Discount Ads eat up local newspaper room
Photo by Chen Shuyi

applying for reimbursement from their employer, and some ticket agents make use of it to obtain huge unlawful profits.

Restrictive factors

"Under the administration system of CAAC, airlines are not the main part of the market," said Chen Xiaoning, the director of the research division of CAAC, "Although they have the responsibility to guarantee and raise capital, the final duty remains with CAAC. So sometimes the goal of these airlines is not making profits, but market expanding. This is why CAAC wants to strengthen the administration of pricing."

Many people including some experts consider that the existing price system cannot adapt to the fast development of civil aviation, so it is time for the market to decide the price. But CAAC has its own view. It says that there are still many factors restricting the ticket market. Firstly, the market mechanism is not perfect and the sales channels are chaotic. Secondly, many airlines lack the capacity of self-restraint. Thirdly, some distribution agencies don't operate according to the relevant regulations.

Murky tomorrow

In order to abate the chaos to some extent, CAAC wants to make its policy flexible once in a while. In March, CAAC for the first time permitted domestic airlines to cut airfares on seven of the nation's busiest air traffic routes to help them attract more travelers. Encouraged by favorable market response, CAAC permitted the carriers to give discounts again in May of up to 40% on eight additional domestic routes.

Overseas Banks Cash in on WTO

China allowed overseas financial institutions in Shanghai and Shenzhen to engage in Renminbi business as of December 11, the day the country formally became a member of WTO, according to the People's Bank of China (PBOC), the country's central bank, in Beijing on December 9.

Meanwhile, overseas financial institutions in Tianjin and Dalian were allowed to apply to engage in Renminbi business starting the same day, according to PBOC sources.

The fresh opening move will be completed according to the terms of China's accession to WTO.

China will allow overseas financial institutions to provide foreign exchange services to all units and individuals within the country's borders, on

condition that the institutions accordingly increase their operating capital or minimum capital requirements, and change their operation licenses.

But aside from the cities mentioned above, local currency transactions will continue to be limited to foreign customers. The restrictions will be gradually lifted during a five-year period from China joining the WTO.

Starting on December 11, overseas non-banking financial institutions may apply to establish companies in China specializing in car credit purchase services in accordance with regulations soon to be publicized by the PBOC.

Overseas investors will also be allowed to apply to establish companies providing financial leasing services in China, PBOC sources said. (Xinhua)

Foreign Securities Institutions to Engage in B-Shares

The China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) announced Chinese securities sector's major promises to the WTO on December 11.

The promises are as follows, according to a spokesman for the commission:

—Overseas securities institutions may directly engage in transactions of Chinese B shares.

—Overseas securities institutions' agents in China can become special members of all Chinese bourses.

—Overseas institutions will be allowed to establish cooperative companies engaging in the management of domestic securities investment funds. The proportion of overseas funds will be limited within 33% initially, and no more than 49% within

the post-entry three years.

—Also within the same period, overseas securities companies will be allowed to set up cooperative companies, with the overseas investment proportion to be limited within one third of the whole.

The cooperative companies can engage in the underwriting of Chinese A-shares, the underwriting and trading of B-shares, H-shares, and government and cooperate bonds, the commission spokesman said, adding that they can even launch foundations.

The spokesman noted that the opening of the securities sector and opening of the securities market are two different concepts, and the latter is not subject to the WTO agreement. (Xinhua)

Solely Foreign-Funded Hospitals Barred

Solely foreign-funded medical institutions will not be allowed to operate in China even though the country has joined the WTO, the Ministry of Health said on December 10.

A spokesperson for the ministry said this policy is in line with international practice, but added that Sino-foreign joint-venture medical institutions will be allowed to operate.

In fact, the ministry said, it has approved more than 200 joint-venture medical institutions so far.

In 2001 alone, it approved

23 joint-venture medical institutions.

The regulations on joint-venture medical institutions were publicized by the Chinese authorities on July 1, 2000.

China pledged to open its market to joint-venture medical institutions during the negotiations for its WTO membership, and the pledge stops there, the spokesperson said.

Fewer than half a dozen countries have so far opened their medical service market as widely as China has, the spokesperson added. (Xinhua)

Foreign Capital Grabs Sewage Harness Project

By Shan Jinliang

AEPA International became the first foreign company to gain the operating rights of a Beijing sewage harness project when it won the BOT (Build Operate Transfer) tendering project of Tongzhou Sewage Harness.

The breakthrough was announced by Beijing International Tendering Co. last Wednesday. Analysts say single-channeled governmental investment on city infrastructure such as water and electricity supplies have been multiplied.

Located in southeast Beijing, Tongzhou District, a rapidly growing densely pop-

ulated area, is no longer able to satisfy its own demand for large-scale sewage harness. Since this October, the district government entrusted the sewage harness project to Beijing International Tendering, which opened bidding in the form of BOT on Chinabidding.com. The tendering attracted a number of domestic and international companies, including Sound Industry and Blue Star, two top environmental friendly companies. In accordance with legal procedures, the Beijing International Tendering and Tongzhou District government organized the experts concerned. Finally, AEPA Inter-

national and AEPA, an American company, won the deal in the final bidding.

The sewage harness factory is planned to be located in South Tongzhou District with an area covering more than 20 hectares. After a total investment of ten million dollars, the factory with a sewage harnessing capacity is scheduled to go into operation in two years, and is expected to recoup the investment in 20 years.

With its advanced facilities and technology, the American company is going to turn sewage into water for field irrigation, aquatics breeding and even fountain water for parks.



Volkswagen and Fiat In For Long Haul



By Zhao Hongyi

At the 2001 Shanghai Auto Exposition, beginning from December 9, a number of Sino-foreign auto manufacturing joint ventures presented their new model products, most of which are of the same models their foreign partners launched around the world.

Volkswagen, which has two joint manufacturing ventures in China, brought new models: Polo and Bora. Jiangsu Nanya Auto Co. Ltd, the Italian Fiat's joint venture with China's Yuejin Automobile Co. Ltd in Nanjing, also brought its newly developed

family sedan, Palio.

Mr. Wolfgang Glaeser, Volkswagen's sales manager for Asia-Pacific, said at the exposition his company would increase its total investment in China by 5.4 billion yuan to 18.4 billion yuan in 2002.

Volkswagen entered the Chinese market over 20 years ago. Its two joint ventures, Shanghai Volkswagen and FAW-Volkswagen, have become leading automobile producers in China.

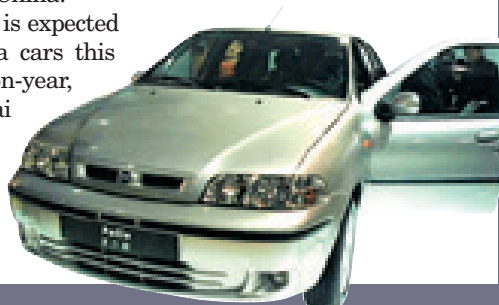
FAW-Volkswagen is expected to sell 130,000 Jetta cars this year, up 16% year-on-year, with sales of Shanghai Volkswagen's Santana series reaching 237,500.

Volkswagen expects the 2002

sales of its new Polo and Bora models to 50,000 respectively.

Total sales of Fiat's Palio around the world have exceeded two million units. Experts from Fiat are optimistic about the Palio's market in China, although they are severely limited to staying under the price ceiling of 100 thousand yuan, the price threshold accepted by Chinese consumers.

Xinhua Photos



HSBC Enters RMB Business in Shanghai

by acquiring a stake in the Bank of Shanghai



Photo by Zhuan Jian

By Zhao Hongyi

The Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) has reached an agreement with the Bank of Shanghai for a possible 8% share acquisition in the latter.

Total purchasing price amounts \$63 million (equal to 520 million yuan). Sources from HSBC confirmed this week.

By the acquisition, HSBC can open its Renminbi business in China, according to the latest opening schedule promulgated by China for its entry to the WTO.

Established in 1995, the Bank of Shanghai is focused on providing credit to small and medium sized enterprises. In 2000, the Bank made profits of 1.028 billion yuan. Its current total assets amount to 96.325 billion yuan.

HSBC has established nine branches, one sub-branch and two representative offices on the Chinese mainland.

When asked why HSBC chose the Bank of Shanghai, Mr. David Eldon, Chairman and CEO of HSBC said, "Shanghai has a very good tradition in dealing with foreign banks. Secondly, the structural framework of the Bank of Shanghai is ideal with over 40,000 individual shareholders occupying 30% of its shares, 2,400 small and medium sized ventures of which most are private enterprises."

At a price of \$880 million, Fortis enters China's market as

Tai Ping Life Reopens on Chinese Mainland

By Zhao Hongyi

Tai Ping Life Insurance Co. Ltd. reopened business on the Chinese mainland, claimed the Hong Kong based insurer on December 5 in Shanghai.

Both Tai Ping Life and Tai Ping Insurance were established in Shanghai in the 1930s and constituted the major players. Their mainland operations were discontinued in the 1950s, but remained

active in Hong Kong.

In May, both Tai Ping Life and Tai Ping Insurance received approval to resume their businesses on the mainland.

Fortis Group purchased 24.9% shares of Tai Ping Life Insurance Co. Ltd. in October this year. Fortis has thus established its first root in China's insurance market.

Active in the fields of insurance, banking and investment,

the Belgium based Fortis had total assets of 438 billion euro and net profit of 2.8 billion at the end of the year 2000.

China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) granted joint venture insurance business licenses to a number of foreign giant players this week, including MetLife, Nippon Life and New York Life and American International Group (AIG).

COFCO & Aon: Insurance Brokerage Partners?

By Zhao Hongyi

China National Cereals, Oils & Foodstuffs Import & Export Corporation, or COFCO, China's No.1 trading corporation, is in discussion with Aon Corporation from the United States for a possible joint insurance brokerage company in the foreseeable future.

Founded in 1952, COFCO has been engaged in grains, oils and foodstuffs import and export business, and has been one of the largest trading enterprises in China.

Aon deals in risk management, insurance brokerage, reinsurance, and human capital consulting services.

"Financial services will be one

of COFCO's three core businesses, aside from its traditional foodstuffs and properties developed in recent years," said Ms. Wu Xiaohui, the coordinator for the new business with Aon.

The Chinese government established three insurance brokerage companies several years ago, namely Dong Da, Jiang Tai and Chang Cheng.

So far, both the government and insurance industry prefer to introduce foreign insurance brokers to cooperate with the existing domestic insurance brokers companies.

Photo by Zhuan Jian



Beijing to Boost Int'l Conventions & Exhibitions Industry

By Jiang Zhong

The 2001 Beijing International Convention and Exhibition Symposium will be held on December 17-18, 2001, which is the first such symposium in Beijing, according to sources of Beijing Tourism Administration and Beijing Capital Tourism Group, the two sponsors of the symposium.

The aim of this symposium is to introduce advanced international conventions and exhibitions (c&e) management methods to Beijing, increase the international c&e opportunities in this city, enhance Beijing's international and domestic presence in c&e industry, thus helping Beijing to play a more important role in this industry.

Yu Changjiang, Administrator of BTA, pointed out during the press conference for this symposium that the c&e industry can bring great improvement to relevant industries, and is a new springboard for Beijing's tourism market. Beijing features all facilities that an international c&e center should have, such as historical relics, comfortable hotels and enhanced security. However Beijing is not yet an international c&e center at present. Geneva held 700 international conventions and exhibitions in 2000, whereas Beijing only managed 200, ranking 54th in c&e income among world cities.

200 representatives, including government officials, c&e companies, tourism agencies, solution providing companies, and experts, will be present at this two-day symposium. Mr. Lee Loong Koon, Director of the Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau (SECB) and Mr. James Michael Murray, Director of Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau will also attend the symposium too. They will discuss the successful experiences of international c&e giants and the essays collected from c&e professionals.

Hills and Islands For Sale in Qingdao

By Zhao Hongyi

Do you fancy owning a tiny island on the east coast of China?

Qingdao, an attractive city along the yellow sea in China's Shandong province, is preparing an auction, for the Chinese as well as foreigners, of barren hills and islands for cultivation early next month.

According to Xinhua News Agency, the municipal government of Qingdao will hold an exhibition in the city in mid January 2002, just one month away. Purchasers of the hills, wetlands and islands will be granted ownership for 70 years.

The municipal government encourages buyers to cultivate these hills and lands for forestry, fruit tree planting, agricultural farming, seafood breeding and sight seeing tours.

Qingdao has a total of 1.1 million mu (approximately 73,334 hectares) of barren land, hills and islands available for cultivation, including 730 kilometers of coast, 38 thousand hectares of coastal wetlands, 69 islands and 150 thousand hectares of coastal sea area available for seafood breeding.

Beijing Doctors Rush to Rescue

Burns specialists fly in after Ningxia explosion injures 41

By Ivy Zhang

Doctors from China's leading burns unit dashed to Ningxia last week after a new furnace exploded at the Calcium Carbide Plant of Jinliyuan Chemical Corporation.

Forty-one people were injured, some seriously, as gas and molten material sprayed workers around the furnace, which was operating at 800 degrees Celsius. The furnace had been installed just two months prior to the accident last Thursday, December 6.

An emergency worker said, "It was horrible. Many people were burned, including young men. What should they do in the future?"

More than 170 medical staff at the Qingtongxia People's Hospital mobilized to receive the injured. Sixteen of the most seriously hurt had to be transferred to the hospital affiliated to Ningxia Medical University in Yinchuan, capital of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Among them, one patient had suffered burns over 100% of his body.

The hospital asked for help from the Beijing Jishuitan Hospital, which has the country's top

burns unit. Prof. Zhang Mingliang and chief doctor Xu Jun arrived on December 8 and operated on five patients the next day.

"When removing skin from the patient, the doctors from Beijing asked us to be meticulous and cherish the patient's unburned skin," said Gao Qingxiang, Director of the Burns Unit of the local hospital. "Even a centimeter of skin must not be wasted."

Bad weather two days later endangered the transfer of vital skin-transplant materials from Beijing. The Airbus boarded in Beijing by another doctor from Jishuitan Hospital was stuck at Xianyang airport after heavy snow closed the airport in Yinchuan.

A military helicopter was placed on standby, but the weather cleared in time for the flight to get through before the transplant materials were compromised. Doctors from Ningxia and Beijing conducted two skin-transplant operations the following day.

It remains unclear if human error or mechanical failure caused the tragedy. The plant has stopped production while investigations proceed.



Skin transplant materials from Beijing are transferred to a hospital in Yinchuan.
Photo by Quan Dong

Post Office Pleads: 'Keep Cards Clean'

By Sun Ming

The Christmas and New Year season creates headaches and excitement in almost equal measure at Beijing Post, which handles all the millions of greetings cards sent from the capital.

Liu Junying, a section chief at Beijing Post, says some people like enclosing little gifts, such as true love knots, badges and handkerchiefs, with letters or New Year cards to their friends. But these bits and pieces, as well as the bells and whistles added to some cards, can make no end of trouble for postal workers.

"They constitute a threat to our costly machines," said Liu. Ordinary mail is usually classified by machine according to the postcodes. However, the sundries concealed in envelopes often jam the machines and stop their work. "We meet such cases nearly every day and have to repair the machines often," said Liu. "If things continue this way,

they could be completely broken."

According to Liang Zheng, vice-director of the administration office of the institution, it costs several million yuan for a machine that can handle 30,000 letters an hour.

The New Year period is the peak-time for correspondence, with 6,000,000 letters a day being handled at the climax, 60% of which are New Year cards. More than 80% of cards checked were found to have odds and ends inside.

"Keys, coins, necklaces, even lighters, mobile phone batteries and bullet casings have been found in envelopes," said Liang. "These odds and ends not only damage the machines but also make trouble for our staff."

Staff must waste time mending damaged envelopes, and some letters never reach their destination as the address has become unreadable.



Mickey Mouse Rides Again

Disney's Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck have returned to Chinese television after a 12-year absence from the country's screens. "Big Windmill", one of the most popular children's programs in China, aired a new series of Mickey Mouse cartoons on Monday.

Disney's Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck appeared on CCTV for the first time in 1986. Disney films and cartoons were prohibited three years later by order of the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television.

(Jian Rong / Wang Dandan)

By Ivy Zhang

Without his costume, Marc Granger looks like any other student, with a sack bag on his back and a blue muffler tucked into his jacket.

But unlike most foreigners in Beijing, he talks shyly in fluent Chinese. And he has a degree in Chinese Opera.

Marc, 27, comes from Annemasse, a small town on the border of Switzerland with France. He is the first foreigner in China to have achieved a B.A. in Chinese Opera, which he received after 5 years of study from 1993 to 1998 at the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera. Now he is preparing for the upcoming national graduate school entrance examination next January.

"When I was about 14 years old, I was very weak and began to learn Chinese Taoist gymnastics, a certain kind of qigong (a system of deep breathing exercises)," Marc said. "From then on, I was interested in Chinese culture and attracted by the mystery of Chinese opera."

Soon after graduation from high school in September 1992, Marc came to China alone to pay his own way at the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera for one month. Then he returned to Switzerland to go on with his studies in the Chinese department of the University of Geneva.

In January 1993, an opera group from China staged a two-hour Sichuan opera named "The Legends of White Snake" in Geneva. Fascinated by the play, Marc decided to go to China to study Chinese art. Four months later, he won a scholarship to come back to China in an effort to live his dream in this ancient land rich with history and culture.

Life at the Academy of Chinese Traditional Opera was hard but rewarding, says

Foreign Warrior Takes Opera by Storm



Photo provided by Marc Granger

Marc. As a student majoring in warrior playing, Marc usually got up at 7 am and practiced Kungfu for 6 to 8 hours every day, including leg training, waist stretching, jumping skills and acrobatic fighting skills.

To be a professional warrior actor, his legs are not only required to be extremely flexible but strong as well.

At the time of graduation, he could play warriors in "8 Hammers", "Yaguan Building", "Lin Chong Running at Night", and "Cross Road".

In the summer of 1996, he won the Gold Dragon Cup at the International Peking Opera Amateur Competition.

Zhou Long, a 36-year-old professor from the academy, guided Marc through the years on campus. Zhou specializes in warrior playing and has received many accolades, including the annual Plum Blossom Award, the highest award in opera circles in China.

Under Prof. Zhou's instruction from 1994 to 1998, Marc has turned into a professional warrior player. His "masterpiece" is playing the role of Lu Wenlong in "8 Hammers", an extract from "Stories of Yuefei".

"Lu is a handsome youth with superb fighting skills," Marc said, "I love it."

He devoted all his time in the last year at school to reading the relevant books, thinking about the looks, postures and details of the character, and working hard to enhance his leg skills. His performance in "8 Hammers" was screened live by CCTV prior to his graduation in June 1998.

"I want to dedicate myself to the cause of promoting cultural exchange between China and Switzerland," Marc said. "It's hard for foreigners to appreciate Peking Opera."

Supermarket Shoppers Face Hostile Environment

By Zeng Peng

Shoppers have been warned not to hang around in supermarkets after tests by the Indoor Environment Monitoring Center revealed a worrying level of air pollution in four famous supermarkets in Beijing.

Test results show that one hour after opening, bacteria levels in the air were 45% above outdoor levels, while carbon dioxide content was triple that outside of outdoor levels, respectively. The oxygen content of the air was deficient and the suspended particulate matter density was 60% higher than normal.

In addition, the window dressing of exclusive stores in supermarkets also pump more harmful chemical matters

into the air. Together, these factors cause "Supermarket Syndrome" — dizziness, headache, suffocation and nausea.

Some supermarkets have begun to pay attention to such environmental concerns. According to Li Li, the director of the planning department of Hua Lian (one of the largest and most popular supermarkets in Beijing), they have taken some measures to improve conditions, such as increasing the number of plants, regulating the temperature of each department, and ventilating the supermarket regularly. But Li also admits that they are unable to monitor the indoor air quality and are thus unable to solve the problem of indoor air pollution by themselves.

Students Test Virtual Trading

By Su Wei

Members of the Sino-US Young Investors Society have begun warming up for the "Dow-Daq Virtual American Stock Market" competition that begins next March.

Contestants in the Dow-Daq will test their skills as global capitalists by making "virtual investments" based on simulated data from the NASDAQ and New York Stock Exchange provided by MSN.com.

In the meantime, would-be participants are allowed to "invest" in one or two companies as a first experience of considering the risks and returns in money management through investing in an overseas stock market. The top investor will be selected at the end of this month based on the real American stock market prices at that time.

During this period, a series of training sessions will be held in order to teach students how to interpret the basic stock market indexes, how to invest for the

long-term and how to master the investment technologies.

Chen Yuhan and her classmate Wu Yin, students in New Oriental School, said, "It is a good opportunity to have more vivid and direct investment knowledge." He Jianhua and his friends also said they cherished the opportunity to meet influential people and talk with them face to face. However, it's not all plain sailing for He.

"The English requirement is a big problem for us to share opinions with foreign students and communicate with these famous personalities," he said.

There were some concerns over the value of the contest and the quality of its organization, but even doubters like Yang Jianfei, an MBA student, said they would take part.

"It is free for us to invest in the real American stock market with no risk of losing money," said Yang, "Why not take this opportunity?"

Oldest Student is Olympic Champ

By Sun Ming

"I study English very hard because I want to do something for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing," says Gao Yugui in fluent English. Gao has been studying for only 10 months. She is 85.

Gao is not only the oldest, but also the most outstanding student in the oral English class held by the Liuyin neighborhood of Xicheng district. Among 50 members of the class, only Gao has grasped all the sentences, according to Guan Suqian, the director of the community.

"It's necessary for me to study English," says the youthful Gao. Liuyin neighborhood where she lives in on the route of the popular "Hutong tour", so many foreigners often appear there. According to Gao, when she met foreigners, she always wanted to greet them. "But I could do nothing but smile or nod before," said Gao, "Now I can speak English to them!"

Gao often carries a booklet named "100 English sentences for Beijingers" with her, and she has already memorized all the sentences thoroughly. The pages of the booklet are tattered from use. But Gao insists on learning new English sentences. "100 English sentences isn't enough for me. I should learn more," she said (in English).

According to Gao, it was very difficult for her to understand everything the teachers said in class. After all, she is over 80 and she knew nothing about English but the 26 letters of the alphabet before she attended the class. So she formally acknowledges her granddaughter as her teacher.

She consulted her granddaughter on the pronunciation of each word and then marked corresponding Chinese characters with similar pronunciations. "Even though it isn't a good way to study English, it does help me. My memory is worse than before."

"I read English sentences two hours a day, otherwise I will forget them. I hope my English could come in handy in 2008. At that time, I can say hello to foreign friends and give them some help."



Photo by Sun Ming



Beijing Film Academy graduate Zhao Wei, 25, shot to fame in the "Princess Huan Zhu" TV series. She has one of the largest teenage followings in China. Her fans have set up thousands of websites.

She left the series to pursue a highly successful singing career, releasing three albums in three years. She recently starred in one of China's most popular TV series "Love in Rain".

She regularly appears in movies, TV commercials and also of course the CCTV Spring Festival Variety Show.

Fashion

Victim

Actress finally apologize for wearing Japanese imperial ensign

By Chen Ying

Poor Zhao Wei. When she changed into the next outfit at an exciting New York fashion shoot a few months ago, she didn't notice the uncanny resemblance of her dress to the flag of a Japanese imperialist.

She sure knows now.

When her picture appeared in the September 2001 issue of *Fashion* magazine, there was no mistaking the monster mistake. Zhao might have been wearing a NYC-brand skirt on a New York street, but the scarlet pattern had been lifted from a World War II Japanese military flag.

The original words of the flag had been changed to "health, peace, happiness and cleanliness," but to a Chinese patriot with a sense of humiliated history, this was a red rag to a bull. Feelings, those precious indicators of Chinese nationalism, had been hurt.

Complaints mounted, switchboards jammed and Internet discussions became largely unprintable. When the survivors of the Nanjing Massacre demanded the dainty singer-actress write a public letter of apology, Zhao must surely have wished she had paid only a little more attention back at patriotic education classes in her high school.

December 3, Zhao released a statement through her manager saying the theme of the photo shoot had been "freedom, health, peace and activeness". The style had just seemed like something eye-catching and attractive to her at the time. But that opinion, of course, only made matters worse. Feelings reached fever pitch. Finally, Zhao's letter of apology was published in *Beijing Youth Daily* on December 11.

Then she accepted an interview from a popular TV entertainment show and apologized all over again. Then the editor of *Fashion*, Zou Xue, who had invited Zhao Wei to the shoot, apologized even more deeply for the bad influence and unconscious hurt wrought upon the public. She next said sorry to Zhao for involving her in the whole matter. Zou offered to resign.

After an investigation, a spokesman for *Fashion* magazine said there was no Japanese employee in the work team in

New York. The designer and employees of the brand NYC were also not Japanese. The magazine will make a more detailed response to the public over the incident in the January 2002 issue. With all the advance publicity, most likely the magazine will sell out. Apologies accepted? Opinions follow:

Liu Xiaoman, postgraduate Beijing University

I don't know whether Zhao Wei really lacks basic knowledge of history. But if it were me, I'd consider things more carefully when I pose for photos in a publication. She shouldn't wear clothes like this.

People in the public gaze should pay more attention to their behavior. I still remember a similar event that happened at the beginning of this year. At that time, at the world diving championship, Fu Mingxia created anger because she appeared at a public gathering wearing white trousers whose pattern contained many dirty words. They are idols to many teenagers and what they do influence large numbers of younger people.

As to the magazine employees, I think they should be responsible for the issue. Although fashion is a kind of art, they must think about China's history and its spirit. Fashion is not just art when it involves politics.

Ran Hengkui, clerk

No excuse can be accepted for this issue. Even a primary school student knows the history of Japanese invasion of China during World War II. Let alone Zhao Wei, who graduated from the Beijing Film Academy and the many other workers around her. Maybe Zhao Wei was not affected at that time, but how about others?

It could have been avoided completely and easily if they were more careful with their follow-up work after the photos had been taken.

As a public person, Zhao Wei should apologize. It can stimulate patriotic feeling in China. In my mind, although China and the Japanese have resumed their relationship for more than 20 years, some Japanese are still not very

friendly with the Chinese. For instance, the Japanese government never admitted to the sex slavery of Chinese women. Even the Japanese prime minister visited a temple for so-called heroes including those warmongers of the Second World War.

Editor, requesting anonymity

It's something about national dignity and patriotism. This event reflects the ignorance of today's youth. The government should teach teenagers more about sensitive topics like this. For instance, most Japanese youths know little about the real history of the World War II. We can forgive, but we should not forget the lessons of history.

I think patriotic education can be so shallow. It's hard to remember if people don't experience something. It's very important to promote patriotism. This is the big lesson for Zhao Wei and other young people. I can forgive Zhao Wei as she said sorry to the public. It's never too late to say you're sorry.

abc87329086, Internet lover from Sina.com

I want to stress this point. Please be fair and objective to Zhao Wei. I've seen a lot of anger directed at Zhao Wei on website bulletin boards. But like many other teenagers, this was the first time I knew of the pattern being that of a Japanese navy flag. In textbooks or the movies, I have never seen it. Of course we all know the history of Japan invading China.

But that doesn't mean everyone will know a Japanese navy flag, or the air force for that matter. But let's look at this a bit more deeply. Why could Japan invade China? It's not enough just by mourning. We should convert this emotion into positive energy to encourage us to study and work hard at making China stronger and more prosperous.

Please stop scolding Zhao Wei. She is very young after all and she has a hopeful future career. She made a mistake and she apologized. It's not easy for a 25-year-old girl to apologize amid all the fury and the opprobrium. Please give her another chance.

Bye Bye Baby Buses

Hello Third Ring Road transport revolution

By Chen Ying

Starting tomorrow, minibuses are banned from the Third Ring Road. Beijing Traffic Bureau says it wants to reduce traffic congestion, increase safety and avoid route duplication in the more prosperous districts. The new transport blueprint pushes most minibuses out of the congested Third Ring Road area into 78 routes in the newer residential districts, hoping to integrate urban and suburban districts.

The minibus was the most popular method of transit for ordinary Beijingers along the Third Ring Road. Foreign residents and students enjoyed the flat two-yuan fare and extra seat availability over regular public transport. But it also caused many traffic problems. For instance, because of its size, a minibus can weave in and out among the regular buses. So bus drivers were often angry with the minibus drivers.

For Beijingers with the bureaucratic clout, the 40-yuan monthly bus pass remains the best value, even though that also means cramming onto the big, crowded public buses.

Another choice of course is air-conditioned buses. Although a useful option for residents without a monthly pass, the tickets can prove relatively expensive, sometimes 6 yuan.

Urban commuters will just have to place their trust in the new plan. A Third Ring Road without screaming *shou piao yuan* (bus conductors) might bring an eerie silence to the bustling thoroughfare. If the plan works and the traffic flow improves, then maybe the moaning of commuters will also decline. Or then again, maybe never. Opinions follow:

Wang Jiufeng, technician

I often take the minibus as my home is near the outskirts of town. There are few buses for the relatively long trip. It takes a long time on the regular bus. But the minibus saves time and it can even stop very close to my home.

But the traffic situation is different for the Third Ring Road near the city center. It's unnecessary to retain the minibuses as there are already so many buses. Plus the minibuses often cause traffic problems. They get in the way of the regular buses and jam the intersections waiting for customers. It's really dangerous sometimes.

I read an article in a newspaper which said the driver started the minibus just as a young woman was getting on, without closing the door. The woman had no time to grab hold of anything. She fell out of the bus onto the street and died.



Minibuses ply new routes

Photo by Chen Shuyi

Tang Lihua, minibus customer

Frankly, the minibus has a good market in urban districts. People can spend just two yuan for a seat on the minibus and avoid jamming onto the big public bus. For most ordinary people, that's affordable.

It's true there are many air-conditioned buses in the city. And people often take a seat on one of them. But the fare is more expensive compared to the minibuses, let alone the ordinary buses. These buses also charge the same price during spring and fall when they don't use the air-conditioning.

In Shanghai, there are just ordinary buses and air-conditioned buses for the public. No matter how long the journey, the ordinary bus fare is one yuan and it's

two yuan for air-conditioned buses. People get what they need. They can get on the ordinary buses if they have a monthly pass or can take the latter if not.

The local government should care more about ordinary people. Although the administration has formally cancelled some minibus routes, many minibuses still run these routes. They have to avoid the traffic cops. So the answer doesn't lie in the minibus itself, but in the management. I believe the minibus can become a normal part of transit just like ordinary buses if the administration makes more effective regulations.

Lin Qiumei, conductor, air-conditioned bus

The most obvious change is that the traffic order will im-

prove with the cancellation of minibuses. The number of customers for air-conditioned buses will also grow. But I think the minibuses have some merit. For example, the minibuses are more flexible. They are convenient for customers to hop on or hop off. But also thanks to their flexibility, they can often duck traffic problems.

In my mind, most minibus drivers and conductors are crude toward the customers. The minibus still has a market if the administration can manage them strictly and employees can modify their service attitude.

Liu Changyue, taxi driver

I think minibuses are the most convenient way for ordinary people. But they really have many shortcomings. For instance, they won't start if there aren't enough customers. And they stop randomly. Many minibus employees come from other provinces. They think less about safety than local drivers do as it's hard to manage them.

I think the cancellation of minibuses offers no obvious changes to transit in urban areas because air-conditioned buses and taxi development is picking up so fast. Certainly it's better to cut down on the number of vehicles.

SOUND BITES

"The responsibility for the war in Bosnia lies with the [western] powers and their agents, not in Bosnia and not with Serbs, Serb people or Serb policy."

— Slobodan Milosevic responds to charges of genocide against him at the UN war crimes tribunal

"The treaty was written in a different era for a different enemy. America's next priority in the war on terrorism is to protect against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them."

— US President George W Bush intends to ditch the 1972 anti ballistic missile (ABM) treaty that outlaws testing new systems

"They bombard our Palestinian security institutions. And then they come and tell us you have to carry out your duties. We are going through a critical period and we reiterate that our strategic choice is peace."

— Yasser Arafat on Tuesday

By Chen Ying

Together Alone

Only children fall back on friends

Personality counts

Among the list of the factors influencing choosing friends, "Active and with good school marks" ranks first with 53%, followed by "Bright and capable" and "Skillful in getting on with others" with 40% and 36% respectively.

In contrast, "Handsome and beautiful" (11%), "Physically strong" (6%) and "Wealthy" (4%) are regarded as the least important factors.

It shows that inner personalities are admired by most of the only children.

"Active and with good school marks" is consistent with the standard of good students promoted by schools. It shows that school-recommended activities or standards may influence children.

Intelligence and good social communication skills are considered influential, as in contemporary society people, and especially only children, more frequently encounter conflicts and unexpected situations.

Sex no obstacle

64% of the surveyed only children say they have friends of the opposite sex in their group.

One reason is that children are increasingly involved in more social relations and have less housework and social responsibilities.

Meanwhile, the comparatively heavy study and character of modern life also require students to overcome differences and cooperate in solving all kinds of problems.

Friends have more fun

More than 61% say they like activities organized by their friends best compared with only 19% who favor school- or class-organized formal activities.

This may be because these formally organized activities are aimed at satisfying the students' demands as a whole and more attention is given to educating students to focus on getting good marks.

Furthermore, activities organized by the school or classes are usually so simplistic that they cannot satisfy only children's diverse psychological demands.

More the merrier

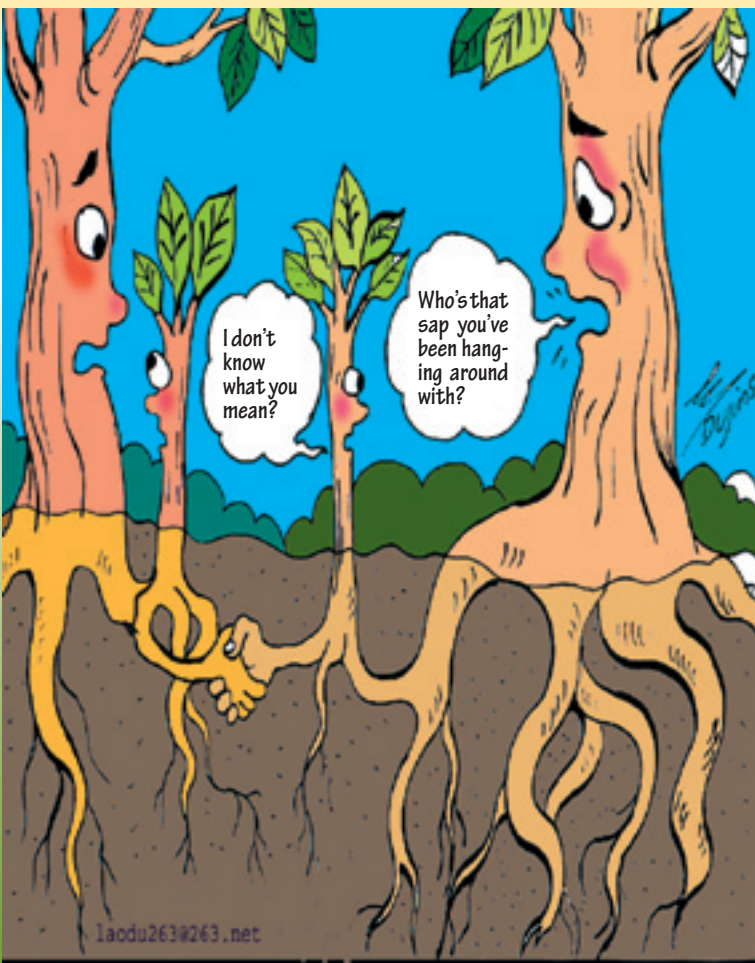
Among those having friends, 40% have four to nine friends in their group and 39% have more than ten friends. Only 21% have no more than three friends in their group.

Only children develop quicker than others. They are full of energy and have a wide range of interests, which may lead them to have a wide range of friends

Furthermore, each of the only children may have different psychological demands ranging from study to physical exercises and entertainments, so it becomes natural for them to have a comparatively large number of friends in their group.

Most Chinese families revolve around a single child, but are these only children really happy, and do they form extended groups of friends to make up for their lack of siblings?

The Beijing Youth Institute surveyed 650 only children in Beijing junior middle schools to find out...



Classmates are key

According to the survey, 42% with no more than three friends in their group say their close friends are their classmates; 41% with friends ranging from four to nine in their group say they are predominantly classmates, while 12% have classmate friends with more than ten friends in their group.

This suggests that the classmate relationship provides more opportunities for the students to have frequent contacts and become familiar with each other.

On the other hand, it shows that the more friends children have, the less important the classmate factor becomes.

With greater communication among friends and increased variety of activities, it is natural to break the limits of classes and schools when making friends.

Age before anything

86% say their friends are in the same age group (with an age difference no more than two years) compared with 12% with friends over two years older and 2% with friends more than two years younger.

With similar ages, the only children are more likely to get along easily. They tend to imitate, observe and learn from others, so they may reach agreements in consumption, entertainment, value judgements and social relations.

Pals aplenty

Almost 80% say they or their classmates certainly have close friends, followed by 17% who are not certain but think they or some of their classmates have close friends.

Only 2% say neither they nor their classmates have any close friends.

This suggests that only children have a high demand for making friends. This may be due to the fact that teenagers become more aware of being grown up and independent.

They become more concentrated on establishing their own value systems and tend to escape from parental protection and restrictions and look for close friends among their fellows.

Distance relationships

According to the survey, less than 8% of only children have friends in their group who live far from their community, while 17% only have friends in their group living nearby. However, 75% have friends from different areas.

Having friends nearby may be related to a sense of shared identity. Community influence should not be valued too much, as mutual happiness is more important than just living nearby.

Furthermore, friends from different areas may enhance mutual communication and form groups based on common interests. In this way, the different psychological demands will also be satisfied.

(By Su Wei)

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BEIJING TODAY
今日北京

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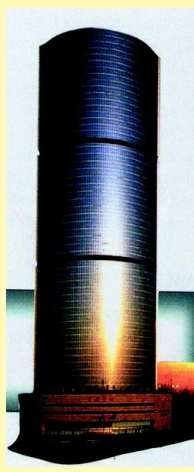
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Roaster's regulations on customer conduct are displayed

Scruffy Diner Sues in Vain

Roasters dress code vindicated in court



A sign by the door to Roaster's reads No Entrance for the Improperly Dressed

By Ivy Zhang

Kenny Roger's Roasters has emerged triumphant from a lawsuit brought by a Beijing man refused entry to the chain's Zhongguancun restaurant on the grounds that he was "improperly dressed".

Zhou Enze stepped into Roasters on August 30. As he was dressed in shorts and flip-flops, an assistant manager asked him to step out, explaining to the indignant Zhou that the restaurant did not allow people wearing flip-flops in.

Zhou immediately requested the manager to show him such a notice in writing. He was shown a notice on the wall stating, "No Entrance for the Improperly Dressed. In order to protect the interests of the majority of customers, Roaster's maintains the right to select customers".

Based on this notice, the manager asked Zhou to leave the restaurant. He returned 15 minutes later and was refused entry again.

Zhou sued, demanding an apology and 5,000 yuan for "mental suffering". He told Haidian People's Court that he asked the manager to show him the restaurant's rules in writing and the manager responded, "The customer is no God at Roaster's, a customer is just a customer" and then stepped aside to chat with others.

At two o'clock, Zhou entered the restaurant for the

third time without any interruption. Later, an employee presented him a fax stating that, "men in flip-flops are not allowed into Roaster's". Later, a reporter from Beijing Star Daily arrived. Zhou said the reporter witnessed two foreigners enter the restaurant unhindered even though one was wearing flip-flops. Zhou said this showed prejudice and hurt his dignity as a Chinese. He claimed his dress was not improper and did not hurt the interests of other customers.

The court disagreed. According to the verdict, Roaster's Zhongguancun store, as a western-style restaurant, has "created its own catering and cultural environment". As Zhou chose to consume at Roaster's, the court decided he should respect the restaurant's cultural environment.

"Through the verdict, we can see that our business operation concept is supported by Chinese laws," said Wang Dandong, Chairman of the Board of Roaster's.

Zhou failed to provide evidence of prejudice against Chinese, as the reporter did not appear in court. He stands by his case, however. He plans to appeal to the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate Court.

"Roaster's is a fast food restaurant," he said. "Back in the US, it has no such regulations to stop customers in flip-flops from dining. Also the regulations are only indicated in Chinese. Roaster's is a foreign restaurant. If it's fair and treats customers equally, the notice should be written in both Chinese and English."

"Ninety-nine percent of our customers in China are Chinese," Wang said. "All our regulations are consistent in China as well as in countries overseas. We treat all our customers equally."

"This is a matter of public education. After China's entry into WTO, businesses along with customers should follow the same rules and treat each other as adult to adult and citizen to citizen. Only in this way can China be really integrated with the world."



Photos by Wang Zhenlong



"I have only two choices: use the law or shoot him dead"

- Niu Lixin, Chairman of the Board of Great Wall International Sports Media Co., Ltd.

Don King pulled the plug on the "Melee in China" after the September 11 terrorist attacks

Photos provided by photocome.com

"Give Us Our Money Back"

Boxing wannabe demands satisfaction from Don King



By Ivy Zhang

The jilted Chinese partner of American boxing impresario Don King is considering taking a trip to America to sue over their failed deal to stage a world title bout between Evander Holyfield and John Ruiz in Beijing.

Niu Lixin, Chairman of the Board of Great Wall International Sports Media Co., Ltd, may be at ringside for the rescheduled bout in Connecticut on December 15, but his next call could be with his lawyer as he seeks redress for the money his company lost after King pulled the plug on the "Melee in China". The fight was set to go ahead on November 25, but on October 3 King announced it was to be moved to the United States owing to security concerns in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

King said the decision was down to HBO, which had paid USD 5 million for exclusive TV rights and was unwilling to send its crew to China.

"We encountered a crisis," said King. "I don't want any Americans to take risks. Of course, I support HBO and the State Department. I'll do what they ask me to do."

The cancellation left Niu's company holding a very expensive baby. In an interview with Beijing Today and Beijing Youth

Daily this week, Niu poured out his thoughts, concerns and feelings about Don King for the first time.

Q: Why did you insist on staging such a large bout when you were short of the necessary financial strength?

A: Boxing is a diamond in the sports industry, connected with race, politics, culture, tourism, economics and gambling. We want to pave the way for exploring the Chinese market in this regard. Speaking of financial problems, I can't agree. Actually, all the world knows that we paid Don King USD 2 million and we covered all expenses for two trips to China of more than 100 people. Even today, I can't admit we met with financial problems, as we have spent 1.6 million yuan to cover accommodation, advertising, promotion and boxing ring rental. The problem is that we did not expect to fall into such a big trap. We have reimbursed tickets at a cost of 9 million yuan.

We have to get an answer from Don King. So far, he has formally informed me of two things. 1. I welcome Niu to go to the US to watch the fight between Holyfield and Ruiz this Saturday. 2. I'll meet Niu's expectations and stage a boxing match in China. Here he comes again. What I want is not a boxing match but money. My

sponsors want money.

Q: What were your income expectations from this bout?

A: At a minimum, this match is worth USD 15 million. We got it at a cost of USD 7 million. In China, ticket sales makes up the biggest percentage, sponsorship comes next and the telecasting is zero. If this problem cannot be solved, it's impossible for China's sports industry to reach the same high level as that of advanced countries.

Q: Do you think Don King is guilty of fraud or making use of loopholes in the contract?

A: I don't want to comment much on this issue. At least, Don King has made use of the loopholes. Whether it's fraud, I don't know. It's within the legal framework. One thing I'm sure of is that King cheated and disrespected my feelings. Somebody asks me whether I'm really going to file a lawsuit. I have only two ways to go after I tried everything in vain - use the force of law or shoot him dead. The ratio-

nal choice for me is go to court, of course. It's impossible for me to give up when USD 2 million is in Don King's account. It's said that Don King never failed in one case in 100 years. That's all hearsay. Half of his cases were settled through mediation and Don King paid money to get himself free. What I want is money. The problem now is how much cash I can get back from King. The total sum I have invested is up to USD 4 million.

Q: Did you know who Don King is before forming a partnership with him? If yes, why did you go on dealing with him?

A: We knew Don King but we didn't have a thorough understanding about him and the situation. We were used by him, and got nothing in return.

Q: Are you afraid of Don King?

A: I never think of the word "fear". I have got all my American friends who worked with me under protection. I've formed a lawyers' team in China for the lawsuit, which consists of lawyers who obtained their lawyer's license in the US. Although Don King is mean, I have solid evidence against him apart from the 30-plus pages of our contract. I'm sure this case can be settled before the Chinese Spring Festival.

Beams Of Light In Darkness

By Hu Xiaoli

“I get great fulfillment from lending a hand to those in despair and darkness,” said soft spoken Li Dongli, a delicate looking woman in her early thirties.

When Li Dongli chose sociology as her major in Beijing University 12 years ago, she didn't expect she would some day be a social worker, a job she hadn't even heard of at that time. This path taken all those years ago has led her on a journey of human discovery, requiring every bit of her love, youth and energy.

The interview with Li took place in her office at Beijing Anding Hospital (a psychiatric hospital). The hospital was quiet on that sunny afternoon, “but I can always feel the inner cries and struggles of the patients and their relatives. They need help, not just from psychiatrists, but from their families, from more caring people and from society at large,” Li said seriously. “And,” she paused, looking at the only potted plant on the windowsill, “I am glad I can do something for them, although my efforts are like a very faint light in the darkness.”

Hearing Cries Of Desperation

Li Dongli, born in Sichuan province, decided to study sociology, “because I wanted to watch and reflect upon this society calmly from a distance, to know more about society, and have more contact with all kinds of people,” Li explained. In college, she spent many hours conducting surveys and research around the city. The more she studied, the more she understood how much society meant to every single person.

Just before graduating, Li by chance served as an intern at Beijing Anding Hospital, researching Social Psychology. This was when she first gained an insight into the lives of people suffering from psychosis, including the broken families behind each suffering individual.

“I never forgot such desperate cries,” Li recalled an experience not long after she began her internship. A middle-aged woman, whose son had just been admitted to the hospital, cried so loudly in the doctor's office that everyone in the building could hear. These were cries from a person who believed in no hope or future at all. Li was completely shocked by the woman's desperate plight.

Li then began to care about those unusual, marginalized people of society. During her re-

search, Li found that nearly half the reasons leading to psychosis was related to social factors like big political movements or inappropriate social contact. Furthermore, if someone suffers from psychosis, he or she will experience further pain from social prejudice. Difficulties arise in every corner of life from problems with work, study, social interaction, to divorce, rejection by family and friends, even when a patient has been fully rehabilitated. On top of this, the families also suffer great distress.

Li realized that perhaps she could help those individuals and their families using the sociology she had learned at college. “Every patient is a unique part of society, and so is his or her family, so observing society as a whole from this angle is very challenging and meaningful,” Li explained, “Above all, I am glad to use my knowledge to do something practical for those people, and for our society.”

So when most of her classmates were busy finding a decent job with a high salary and position after graduation, Li volunteered to be a social worker in Anding Hospital.

Li Dongli stepped into this new, unfamiliar world without any doubt. She says she has never regretted making this choice although her working environment is full of endless hardship, prejudice, and torture.

Extending a Hand of Hope

Apart from the regular psychiatric treatment, Li spends most of her time writing letters

with the patients and their families, talking with them, finding social security, looking for a job for the patients. Li talks to the patients and takes them into her confidence, so very soon they feel at ease with her. “Half a year ago...” Li began to tell a story about a patient she helped.

Half a year ago, Li noticed a patient in the ward, a 50-year-old man who had been in the hospital for several years. His illness had almost been cured but he seemed to want to stay in the hospital. After talking to him for many hours, Li finally got the bottom of it. The man and his wife were divorced, and their house had gone to his wife and two daughters, who rarely visited him after he was admitted to hospital. The man told Li that he actually hoped to leave the hospital and lead a normal life, but he didn't know where to go.

After knowing this, Li visited his family many times, hoping the family would help him. At first, Li was refused by the family. After the fourth time, when they finally realized this tough young girl was not going to give up, they changed their mind. When the man excitedly told Li one day that he got a birthday present from his family, Li smiled. Li furthermore succeeded in persuading the man's original work unit to provide him with a small flat. “Now, his illness has stabilized, and he has created another family,” Li said cheerfully.

For Li, to see the patients leave the hospital and reintegrate into society is the best form of job satisfaction. After receiv-

ing a long call from a patient's relative, Li mentioned another case with a smile.

“This patient was a very young man,” Li recalled. After treatment in the hospital, his illness improved and he went home. He didn't dare to go back to work or re-establish contact with people. When Li first visited him at 11 o'clock one morning, she saw him still lying in bed, with the room in a terrible state. “If he remained in this state for long, his illness would re-occur,” Li explained. So Li made a timetable for him, asking him to do things according to the schedule on the table—when to get up, when to clean the room, take exercise, when to read the newspaper.

At first, the boy didn't do anything according to the schedule. Li talked with him time and again and advised his family to encourage him to complete the schedules—one schedule followed through, one award. Gradually, he started to do one or two things. During this period, Li visited him nearly every day. A week passed, then a month, two months: one day when Li walked into his room and saw a new bed in a clean room, she knew she would soon receive her own reward. “He got a new bed, which was the call for a new life from his inner heart,” Li recalled emotionally, “Now, he has a job, and does very well.”

No Regrets

On Li's desk, letters from nearly 20 provinces sit quietly waiting. They are from the patients and their relatives, talking about emotional and social problems, and thanking her for the help. “My work, compared with

the professionals, like psychiatrists, psychologists, focuses more on the aspects of the patients' whole family, and the society around them, rather than the patients themselves,” related Li.

Outside her routine work, Li also joined a project called Family Members Interference in the Mentally Ill under the instruction of Canadian Doctor of Psychiatry, Michael R Phillips. “The project involves uniting the whole family to help the patient to overcome his or her illness and return to normal life, for about 90% of the mentally ill in China live with their families.” When talking about a way which might help the patients and their families, Li always seems excited.

Time flies, Li has done this job for 12 years. Four other classmates of hers working as social workers have all left the hospital, and the new graduates don't stay long, because the outside world seems more beautiful and colorful than the days spent with mentally ill patients and their suffering families.

A good social worker needs professional knowledge and skills that can be learned, but above all, one needs great patience, sympathy, and love for every person in their suffering. Li said she had been greatly influenced by her mother, who was a nurse. When Li was small, she often saw her mother bathe wounds and administer medicine for a patient. The wounds were so horrible that little Li wondered why her mother never groaned or complained, but smiled to the pa-

tient. “My mother told me that if one helps those in pain from the heart, he or she will feel something special,” recalled Li. When Li sees her own work wipe away the tears of relatives, help the patient live a normal life, she understands that special feeling her mother didn't express before.

However, Li also feels depressed after hearing the cries and miserable stories from the families after a day's work. When hearing the news of a patient committing suicide, she will be gutted for several days. “But I keep telling myself that being a helper needs a very strong mind.” So in her spare time, she likes to chat with friends, listen to music, and go mountain climbing at weekends.

12 years ago, young Li Dongli opened a heavy door among the numerous doors of the corridor of life. She knew the door would open a world of pains, cries and sufferings before her, but she also knows the door will definitely lead to will, hope and love for herself, as well as the people she is helping.

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Photos by Zhuang Jian



Ma with well-known xiangsheng actor Ma Ji at his farewell performance

Photos by Cui Jun

Is Cross Talk on the Way Out?

By Miao Yajie

The most sensational cultural event last week in Beijing and Tianjin was the farewell performance of Ma Sanli, an 88-year-old xiangsheng, or cross talk master, to say adieu to his 80 years on stage in Tianjin. Because of him, the laughter accompanying xiangsheng, that has faded out of many people's memories for almost a decade, came back to life.

Art of Language

Xiangsheng used to be the most popular folk art form in north China. In around 1870, xiangsheng developed from its street performance origins into a profession. Although there is no room to go into detail, worth mentioning is the first big name in xiangsheng history: Zhu Shaowen (1829-1903), stage name 'fearless of poverty' (穷不怕). He started to learn Beijing opera at an early age and later was a successful playwright in the military pieces for Beijing opera. He was erudite but not interested in the imperial civil examinations. Since his generation, xiangsheng has enjoyed a position ranking as an independent trade. The master-appren-

tice relationship and the concept of guild formed, and the genealogical tree of the trade has continued to grow ever since.

In a period of 150 to 200 years at most, xiangsheng developed from a one-man comic act to two-men comic dialogue, to multi-performer conversation, or even male and female performers together in form, and consisted of four basic elements: talking, imitating, provoking laughter with funny remarks, and stylized singing (说、学、逗、唱).

Masters of Our Time

Two names remain on the must-mention list of the past half-century. One is Hou Baolin (1917-1993); the other is the aforementioned Ma Sanli (1914-).

One of Hou's famous pieces is *Guan Gong Fights Qin Qiong*, both of whom are well-known generals in Chinese history. Guan lived from 160 to 219, and Qin died in 638. The two could by no means meet each other, let alone compete in military skills. However, in order to please a powerful warlord's father, who issued orders at whim, Beijing opera performers had to forsake their original playwright, and arranged the two into one opera for the ignorant man on his birthday. Since those who like to give arbitrary and impracticable directions still exist nowadays, people laugh when hearing *Guan Gong Fights Qin Qiong*.

One piece named 'Cakes' by Ma Sanli satirizes lawless businessmen of the old days. The story tells of a man seeing a pastry shop on the street with a sign at the door, 'on sale, 100 for 5 pieces.' He went into the shop and saw the cakes in the glass counter are more than his stomach could desire. He paid 100, and took the package away. He opened it, the cakes were as small as chessmen; the man was

confused, and asked the shopkeeper to give him the bigger ones in the glass counter. The shopkeeper told him they were all the same, he looked at the cakes in the counter, no, they were bigger; anyway, he watched the shopkeeper wrap those bigger ones for him. He took the package over, opened it, the pieces were still as small as chessmen! Why? He examined carefully, the counter was made of magnifying glass! Ha ha ha!

Satire is Xiangsheng's lifeline

The current situation of xiangsheng is dire, to say the least. Strictly speaking, no good or new works and performers have appeared in the past ten years. Xiangsheng performers with certain fame altogether amount to 50 pairs nationwide, among whom only 20 to 30 pairs are active on stage. Less than 10 pairs enjoy some reputation among the active ones. Most of the most popular performers have temporarily, or for a long time, disappeared from the stage as full time cross talk actors. Although xiangsheng is not the only traditional performing art to be suffering, its plight is more severe due to the very small number of professional xiangsheng writers around the country, totaling at most seven or eight.

The audience for xiangsheng has shrunk sharply, especially in the big cities among young people with a high educational background. Xiangsheng to some people has become at most a boring dialog, something along the lines of, 'I just can't laugh no matter how much you tickle me'.

Is this because people don't appreciate this age-old art form anymore in the new century?

The answer is no.

Ma Sanli's farewell performance held on last Saturday provided excellent proof. All the 3,000 tickets were sold out with lots of Beijingers going all the way to Tianjin. Reporters from some Beijing media were in fear of being refused admission to the theater on account of no courtesy tickets. The touts outside the theater were speculating from 400 yuan for ordinary seats, to 2,000 yuan for VIP seats.

Where there is unfairness, falsehood, and evil, there should be xiangsheng to speak for ordinary people. If cross talk loses its conscience, its spearhead, it would be like the bee losing his sting: his time is counted. No wonder a recent report in one of the capital's newspapers has brought out a whole page calling for a funeral for xiangsheng.

People who grew up with the laughter from xiangsheng will not forget it so easily. A famous xiangsheng performer once said xiangsheng is a profession to make people happy, and as long as people need happiness, xiangsheng would last.

Time and Termites Unsteady

Yongle Bell

By Shi Xinyu

The nearly 600-year-old Yongle Bell in the Big Bell Temple, on which the Sanskrit sutras were just deciphered on November 19, is now faced with a new problem: the wooden frame which has supported it for more than 250 years is suffering damage probably caused by time and termite bites.

"White wood traces frequently found on the floor made us realize something was wrong with the frame," said Deng Decai, from the Big Bell Temple Museum. "Now specialists from the National Cultural Relics Bureau, Beijing Cultural Relics Researching Institute, and Beijing Forest College have been invited to give the frame a thorough check-up. Then a solution will be drawn up and carried out."

According to Deng Decai, no maintenance records have been found since the frame was built in 1733. This scientifically designed frame made for the 46-ton-weight Yongle Bell contains 11 beams and 8 pillars: beams were overlapped in three tiers to share the weight originally carried by the main beam to ten cross sections, while pillars were built slanting towards the inner side of the beams of the bell to prevent the separation of the mortise and the tenon. Now, after the passage of two centuries, though the structure is still strong enough, the originally scarlet pillars and beams decorated with golden dragons have all faded out with breakages clearly seen here and there. "Anyway, it's time to reinforce the frame," concluded Deng.



The worn-out frame

Photo by Cui Jun

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Coffee, Bitter or Not ?

Calling on cafés on a journey

By Zhao Pu

“Coffee is a symbol of Europe”, says Chen Danyan, “and a city’s flavor can be smelled sitting in one of its cafés.”

“Relishing the flavor of other people’s things,” is the description by Chen on her new book about her 11 years’ journey through Europe. One of the

flavors steams out from those famous and forgotten cafés on the streets of big and small cities in Europe, thus framing the chapters in *Coffee, Bitter or Not*.

The author of the book, Chen Danyan, came to the forefront by writing stories about women and children against the background of Shanghai, the place

where she grew up. Her life has alternated between writing and traveling. “I leave alone with a year’s income from books for new trips; ...and come back when the money’s used up, to begin another year’s hard work in writing.” When she first planned a book featuring her journey, she came across the title “Relishing the flavor of other

people’s things”. Beginning to write, she found that the flavors should be distributed into five parts, including the flavor of cafés.

Coffee, Bitter or Not, published by the Yunnan People’s Publishing House in January 2001, portrays 26 cafés on her way around Europe. It’s not just different tastes of coffee,

there’s more about the traces of culture and history left in those cafés scattered on the old streets of Europe. Browsing the chapters and café pictures in the book, the reader feels and touches those European cafés through the author’s particular perspective—that of a delicate oriental woman writer.

Chen Danyan: Relishing the flavor of other people’s things

At the very start of the journey, I had no idea about composing a book for the intermittent ten-year trips.

Walking along those foreign streets with just a backpack, and listening to those alien languages, I felt like a shadow from a fairy tale that had lost its owner, a shadow that no long needed to follow the owner’s suit, but could act freely. My words can hardly depict that feeling—the pleasure, the comfort, the indulgence, the nervousness, the deliria and also prudence... It’s not equivalent to the sunshine and laughter of a vacation, nor the wandering of a vagrant swayed by fate. Those small lanes, houses, churches, squares, restaurants, and those quiet window seats in cafés, directed my way step by step through foreign lands. From Nagasaki to Munich, Berlin, Rome and Paris, Salamanca and Porto, Saint Petersburg and Krakow: these were the stars in my sky, and a section of my life sparkled there.



Photo by Gong Wenxia

Caffè Costanti-Arezzo, Italy

Arezzo is an ancient city in Italy, which became a commercial center in the 6th century B.C. The Church of Saint Francis in the city claims to be a world-famous fresco church. The fresco of the Crusades in the church is said to be the most beautiful fresco remaining on the earth, and a glance at it may cost you 12,000 lire (\$5.50).

The Caffè Costanti facing the church is the oldest and most exquisite café in the city. The café has remained almost unchanged over the last century, except for two pictures added on the wall. One of the pictures was taken in 1925, and features the host of the café pulling an ice-cream barrow; the other one was in 1945, with various wine bottles behind the counter giving no hint of the war’s disaster.

The coffee is fragrant, with those cakes, ice cream and deserts. The sugar skin on the little pieces of bread is always as lovely as the smiles on young girl’s faces. The high backs on those old-fashioned train seats in the café are covered by artificial leather, as they were before World War II.

Schwarze Pumpe Café-Berlin, Germany

The subway leading to Schwarze Pumpe Café is old and shabby. It passes through the

Rosa Luxemburg Squares Station. This century old subway station in East Berlin was erected in commemoration of the famous German socialist, activist of international communism in the same period as Lenin—Ms. Rosa Luxemburg. A large portrait of her hangs on the wall of the station.

It also passes through the Alexander Square Station. Not far from that square, there is the Square of Marx and Engels. Statues of the two founders of socialism stand in the center of the square. Tourists dropping by usually take a photo of “Marx, Engels and me”.

Schwarze Pumpe Café stands on a small lane nearby the subway station. Many people in West Berlin know about this café, there used to be a state-owned coal factory on the site of this quiet café.

After the reunification of East and West Germany, the factory became insolvent due to backward techniques. The tablet on the gate of the café is an old tablet taken from the old factory. The newspaper reporting on the factory is stuck up on the wall; some machine parts are scattered in the corners; the electric fan on the roof seems to be an original from the staff canteen...

When there are very few clients, the café looks more like an exhibit room of the factory’s history,

with hardly any fragrance of coffee.

Time in cafés

At 9am, most cafés are still closed. Looking inside through the shut doors and windows, the chairs are all laid on tables. The mixed smell of last night’s cigarettes and coffee seeps out of the café through the cracks in the doors and windows, onto the street. First guest is the nine o’clock sunshine, which warms the iron chains locking the tables and chairs. And when the waiters come to open those iron locks on the tables’ legs, they are already warm.

At 11am, someone is having breakfast on the window seat in the café on the street corner. He must be lonesome, that guy eating alone in the café at 11am on a Saturday—a lonely guy who lives alone, and even needs to kill time in a café at the weekend.

At 1pm, people are almost dozing off under the heat of the sunshine; soda water is bubbling in the glass on the table; the oily smell of food is floating in the air; and the smell of fried potato chips add the feeling of satisfaction after lunch. Trees are all stock-still in glaring sunlight out of the door and the windows, seemingly dozing off. People sitting beside the window are chatting without feeling tired, whereas their voices resounding

through the warm and thick air sound a little sleepy.

At 5pm, a man walked out of the most famous anti-traditional café-CAFE on the most famous street-Oranienburger in Berlin, with his dog. That’s a café with a lot of guests smoking, so cigarette smell lingers on their clothes and hair. People are at work on weekdays, so there are mostly professionals, college students and tourists in the café in the afternoon. They give out a kind of leisurely aura, which is far from routine daily life. Many people ordered a lot to eat at that sunny 5pm, and ate and ate. When it snows, a green candle is lit on each table.

At 12pm, golden time for a café. Like a piece of flaring charcoal burning in a fire, the café at 12pm is sending out mixed fragrance of hot coffee and Spanish wine, golden candle lights, and relaxing music. At that time of the day, people in the café are no longer careful and prudent. Their hearts have been washed by coffee, boiled in wine, and dipped in music, and thus yearning to open their doors to show the stories inside... then become friends, confidants, and lovers in that warm café. Coming out of the café, the stars in the sky seem to be enlarged in the deep night.

— Extract from *Coffee, Bitter or Not*
Translated by Zhao Pu



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Picture from *The Touch*
By Zhu Lin

In her upcoming adventure film *The Touch* to be released next summer, Michelle Yeoh cooperates again with Peter Pau, Oscar winner for cinematography in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, as both take different roles.

Besides starring as the heroine, Yeoh, the 1997 Bond Girl, will make her debut as a producer in *The Touch*. Pau stars as director. Talking about the film, Yeoh predicts, "I think it'll be more interesting than *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*."

Branded as the female equivalent of Jackie Chan in Asia, Yeoh goes in for action films. Her first self-produced film sets no exception. Budgeted at about \$20 million, *The Touch* tells the story of a criminal gang working within a big circus.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon Talent Resurfaces in The Touch

Yeoh plays a trapeze artist in an acrobatic troupe in this action adventure. Ever since this August when filming started, the wildest parts of Tibet and Dunhuang have provided a stunning backdrop.

The original story happens in Europe, and it was Pau who decided to revise it into a Chinese context, "We have endless legends in China. Why do we have to fit into a foreign background?" The big 'international' crew is now working hard under Pau's direction. The cast and crewmembers come from 12 different countries. Six assistant directors speak different languages.

"I was so happy to work with such an international family," said Yeoh at the press conference of the film on December 4 at Beijing's Kunlun Hotel. She also revealed her intention to make the transfor-

mation to producer little by little because of her age.

The filming is going well apart from a few little hitches. Ben Chaplin, well known for his touching performance in *The Thin Red Line*, has become another highlight of *The Touch* in the leading male role. With no prior experience in martial arts, Chaplin has been working very hard. Once during a fight scene he was too nervous and accidentally injured Yeoh and a few others. Fortunately none of the injuries was serious.

Photos by Jackey



Michelle Yeoh

New Year Concert Welcomes Suggestions

By Zhu Lin

More than 50 concerts under the name of 'New Year Concert' will be splashed across Beijing's performing market from mid-December to next January. All the spotlights are focused directly on the Beijing New Year Concert on December 31 at the Grand Hall of the People. After its debut in 1997, the New Year Concert has made impressive progress, although suggestions are still required.

Shining stars at the concert include Sarah Chang, the genius violinist, Li Yundi, winner of the latest Chopin International Piano Competition and Christina Andreou, the German soprano. Dai Yuqiang, Luciano Pavarotti's first Asian student, will sing a Chinese folk song, *Dating at Aubao* together with Andreou. The Beijing Symphony Orchestra will cooperate with members of the German Radio Symphony Orchestra.

While the performers' quality is assured, the concert would benefit from interacting with the market in a broader sense. "In Vienna, the New Year Celebration fits very well into the business world," said Lucy Nie, who has been working on relaying the New Year's Celebration in Vienna on CCTV for years, "CDs of the New Year Celebration in Vienna are released onto the market the day after the concert." During the past five years, however, the Beijing New Year Concert has never launched a single CD.

"The Beijing New Year Concert can at least learn something from their program arrangement," suggested Nie.

As people in China are appreciating music more deeply, the concerts are judged by more exacting standards. That point is crucial especially since the latest Beijing Music Festival boasted of a diverse and bold program, which has driven audiences to expect still more. In contrast, the main program of the New Year Concert this year lacks variety—*The Festival Overture* by Chinese composer Shi Wanchun, the Uyghur folk song *Dance for Youth*, Hector Berlioz' *Rakoczy March* and Modest Mussorgsky/Ravel's *The Great Gate of Kiev*.

Starting the New Year to the sound of music, the Beijing New Year Concert is on its way to finding a brand of its own.



Beijing Symphony Orchestra

Photo provided by Huang Guoping

How Far is Picasso's Oil Painting from China?

By Zhao Pu

An exhibition of 'Black and White Images—Picasso Prints' will be held at the Art Museum of the China Millennium Monument from December 15, 2001 to February 15, 2002. 161 original Picasso prints from the Musée de Lodève in France, which had previously been on display in Guangzhou earlier in November, are presented in the exhibition.

The art pieces of Picasso lie in art museums all over Europe, but have rarely been presented in China. While this Picasso print exhibition breaks the ice, it arouses a query at the same time—where are Picasso's oil paintings?

What has blocked their way to



Photo by Iceberg

China? According to Shi Guangsheng, director of the Art Museum of the China Millennium Monument, the biggest obstacle for drawing those art works is a financial problem, "Most of the large scale art exhibitions previously held in China are governmental exchange programs, and

it's still financially difficult for China to arrange such costly exhibitions commercially." Another hindrance is lack of suitable exhibiting space, since the present state of most domestic exhibition halls still fails to meet the standards of such high profile works of art, says Shi.

General Manager of the China International Exhibition Center, Zhang Yu holds a different view, "The market is the major problem. Take the exhibitions of Henry Mall and Zhang Daqian for example, very few visitors showed up at the exhibition hall." The art exhibition market in China is still immature, "So what we should do now is to warm up the market, which in-

volves marketing and promotional efforts."

Picasso endowed us with nearly 60,000 works, dating from 1900 to 1973. They include oil paintings, murals, prints, sculptures, set design, pottery, multimedia work and so on—each medium executed distinctly and with remarkable creativity. As masterpieces like *Guernica* and *Les Femmes d'Alger* have passed around the world for the appreciation of many, it's a pity they are left behind in Picasso's visit to China.

Whatever the reasons—money, exhibition space, or market, we hope the problem can be solved soon and look forward to those genuine art treasures' emergence in our exhibition halls.

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Photo by Chen Shuyi

Chinese wrestling, excellent!



Traditional Wrestler Revives Ancient Art

Natural Fiber Makes Kerry Comeback

By Jiao Pei

Ancient Chinese people paid great attention to the concept of harmony between man and nature. However, modern people seek to control nature rather than cooperate with it. This feeling of estrangement has in turn sparked a reaction, making many people eager to return to the earlier philosophy and give more attention to understanding and protecting the natural environment.

Situated in the basement of Kerry Shopping City, Citron Pavilion (香樟阁) is a new shop that aims to ride this trend, specializing in products made completely of natural cotton cloth, including home decorations, bags, and bed sheets. Owner Wu Hui says everything is handmade and dyed with pure natural organic pigments. Brown sheets, for example, are dyed with an extract of pomegranate, while a light green scarf is dyed using a grass called "Ai Cao (艾草)".

Colorful decorations come in the guises of fruits, vegetables and animals, all of which are remarkably true to life. Dark blue bags feature traditional designs, making them ideal complements to traditional Chinese clothing. Prices range from just a few yuan for decorations to several hundred yuan for more extravagant items such as bed sheets.

Add: Citron Pavilion, B-28B, 1F Kerry Shopping City, Kerry Center, 1 Guanghualu, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 9:30am-7:30pm. **Tel:** 85299497.

Photo by Chen Shuyi



By Li Dan

An aging wrestler has resuscitated the celebrated Tianqiao wrestling culture in the south of Beijing. Visitors to the Huasheng Tianqiao Folk Culture Market can get a taste of the Chinese capital's traditional popular culture while enjoying the flavor of genuine Beijing-style snacks like Douzhi (豆汁 bean soup), huoshao (火烧 baked wheat cake), and baodur (爆肚儿 quick-boiled tripe). Friends gather to talk their



Shuang slams a hapless opponent

hearts out over snacks while watching the performances. Excellent performances draw a chorus of: "Hao! Tai bang le! (Excellent! Brilliant!)"

The owner of the Market is a famous wrestling coach, Shuang Dequan, a Manchurian in his 60s who won several national wrestling competitions in younger days. Chinese wrestling reached its peak in the late Qing dynasty, when only emperors and royal family members had the chance to see the wrestlers perform. After the downfall of the Qing

Dynasty, the unique skill of Chinese wrestling led a vagabond life on the streets. The wrestlers finally gathered in south Beijing's Tianqiao district, where Shuang was brought up. When Shuang was very young, he learned Chinese wrestling from old practitioners. He now has more than 20 apprentices to whom he has passed on his art to preserve it for future generations.

It costs only 2 yuan to see the performances at Tianqiao and get a glimpse of how Beijing people were entertained at the beginning of last century.

Add: Huasheng Tianqiao Folk Culture Market (华声天桥民俗市场), west side of Panjiayuan Flea Market. Turn left out of west gate of Panjiayuan Flea Market, walk to the end of the road and Tianqiao Market is to your right. **Open:** Mon-Fri 3 pm-4:30 pm; Weekend, 10 am-11:30 am / 3 pm-4:30 pm. **Tel:** 67629709.

Best Bites

Savor the South Silk Way

By Xiao Xia

"The prints of a horse's hoof can still be traced on the stone path today. Together with a Buddha and admonitions on the cliff, skeletons can be spotted in the huge caves or under the sheer precipice from time to time. These were left by floods or avalanches," Li Xu, a traveler, described the South Silk Way in his eyes. A newly opened restaurant, called South Silk Way, tells the legends of the same place.

The South Silk Way was an ancient route for caravans to transport tea and salt from Yunnan to Tibet over the last few thousand years. The huge profit of tea and salt drove warriors to risk their lives in the wild forest and in the snowy mountains. Entering the restaurant, diners are immediately struck by a massive photo depicting a man and his horse on a journey beset by danger.

As a restaurant however, South Silk Way is not tough at all. It looks more like a loft serving steaks rather than serving typical Yunnan food and special rice wine, if you ignore the exhibited relics found in the South Silk Way. It is distributed from the unique table and chairs, handmade glasses, dishes and the modern atmosphere.

Yunnan food is slightly spicy while not as extreme as its Sichuan cousin. The bamboo rice and rice wine are a 'must taste' in South Silk Way. The cost of a Yunnan banquet with accompanying legends is only two to three hundred yuan.

Add: 31 Chaoyang Park South Road, Chaoyang District, South silk Way (Chama Gudao 茶马古道).

Open: 11:30am-2:30pm; 5:30pm-11:30pm. **Tel:** 65085618.



Photo by Yong Mei

What's your favorite shop, stand, bar or restaurant? We will be very happy to share your experience with all our readers. And don't forget, a mystery gift is waiting for you if we print your story. Please contact us at 65902524 or 13910916642. Email: shopping@ynet.com.



Shen's Self-Portrait

Painting by Needles

By Li Dan

Shen Decong has devoted himself to bridging the very different arts of Western oil painting and Chinese embroidery, using needle and thread to create an "embroidered oil painting".

Shen is a graduate of the China Arts Institute's Oil Painting Department and a third-generation heir to the "Free Stitch" embroidery technique created by Yang Shouyu in Suzhou. His works are on show at the World Trade Shopping Mall, featuring various themes such as portraiture, still life and landscapes. All the works creatively blend Suzhou traditional embroidery with Western classical oil painting styles, achieving a more three-dimensional effect with vivid and immediate impact. Shen's apprentice is on hand to show how the master does it.

Shen says Free Stitch originated in the 1930s, when it broke away from traditional Suzhou embroidery to create a more varied approach that outstripped European "Needle Painting" in terms of technique. Shen has created many works and received many accolades in the past decade. Among his signature works are: Self Portrait, Portrait of Van Gogh, Portrait of Rabin, and da Vinci's Mona Lisa. Portrait of Rabin is in the collection of former Israeli First Lady Leah Rabin.

Add: B1/WB119, Guwu Xiuhuang (古吴绣皇), near the Skating Rink, China World Shopping Mall, China World Trade Center (take bus 1, 4, 57, 28, 48, 9 or subway to Guomao).

Open: 9:30am-9:30pm.

Price: 700-10,000 yuan, average 3-4,000 yuan.

Tel: 65056226.

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Foreign Housing on a Limited Budget

By Wang Dandan

John Neill is a foreign expert in Beijing working for a private enterprise. He has to pay his rent by himself, and so price is a serious consideration. He can only afford 1,000 USD a month, which is low by foreign-approved housing standards. Mr. Neill phoned Beijing Today and asked if we could help him by introducing the details of the security, facilities and surroundings of housing within his budget. Beijing Today's market survey came up with the following results:

Location

The better the location, the smaller the apartment. Take Roman Garden, located in Anyuan Road, Chaoyang District as an example. 1,000 USD can rent a 140-square-meter apartment here as it is not so close to the central area. However, the Huawei Center, located in Xidan, would cost 1,100 USD for an apartment from 60 to 65 square meters. Yabao Apartment close to Jianguomen would cost 1,100 USD for 70 square meters.

Facilities

Nearly all the foreign-approved projects have clubs which include swimming pool, health club, billiard, table tennis, laundry, beauty salon etc. Some even offer post offices (Roman Garden). Some offer children's playgrounds, for example Huiyuan International Apartments, located in the Asian Games Village, and Greenlake Garden by Chaoyang Park. All the projects have business center and ticket booking service.

TV Channels

Roman Garden offers the biggest range of channels: CNN, HBO, CNBC, CINEMAX, ESPN, National Geographic Channel, Channel V, Star TV, NHK, RAI, TV5, DW. Basically, all the projects have at least CNN, HBO, Channel V, Star TV, NHK

Services available

There is not much difference in services. Nearly all the projects have housekeeping and laundry services, but you have to pay extra for it. Yabao Apartment does not offer this service. Warwick International Apartment not only provides the above services, but

has a shuttle bus as well.

Air-conditioning/heating fees

Rent always includes air-conditioning/heating fees.

Parking

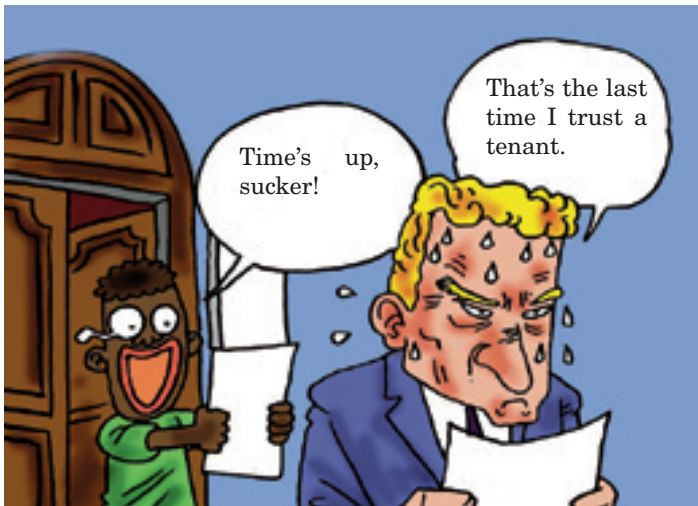
Parking fees differ according to the different projects. Yabao Apartment: free of charge; Greenlake Garden: RMB300/month (Carport) RMB500/month (Basement); Warwick International Apartment: RMB 400/month/lot; Roman Garden: RMB 500/lot/month (basement); Julong Garden: free of charge; Huiyuan International Apartment: Free of charge (carport) RMB500/month/

lot (basement); Huawei Center: USD 90/month/lot.

Telephone bills

Huiyuan International Apartment and Huawei Center do not charge for local telephone calls, while others do.

In a word, there is not much difference among these projects. Mr. Neill can choose whatever project he likes. The only thing he has to consider is the location question. It is better to live in an area with good traffic and entertainment facilities. Security is essentially the same everywhere, as they all have entrance registration at the gates.



Law Lets Rent Cheat off the Hook

By Wang Dandan / Yan Ming

Annie is an Italian owner of a foreign-approved house in Beijing. As she does not often stay here, she decided to rent out her house to a man named James.

James signed a two-year contract, according to which he should pay the rent in six-month installments. James paid for the first six months, but then failed to pay the next installment, claiming severe economic difficulties.

Annie is a kind lady and told him not to worry but to try and pay the rent as soon as possible. Three months later, James paid for three months.

That was the last money Annie saw at the end of two years, she had received money for only nine months. She went to court to demand James be made to pay up.

According to the Rental Contract provisions of the Code of Civil Law, the legal protection period for such a contract is just one year, regardless of what period you have signed up for.

For this reason, the court awarded Annie just 12 months rent instead of the full 15 months owing, because the law only protects her for one year. Annie says she will never let the same thing happen again.

Office Prices

Silver Tower:

Rent: US\$35/month/sqm

Location: Northeast Third Ring Road, Chaoyang District. Close to Hilton Hotel, located conveniently near the Third Ring Road and airport express way.

China Life Tower:

Rent: US\$45/month/sqm(net)

Location: Chaoyangmenwai Avenue, Chaoyang District. It is only 100 meters away from Chaoyangmen subway station.

China Resources Building:

Rent: US\$36.8-38.8/month/sqm

Location: Jianguomen North Avenue, Dongcheng District.

CITIC Building:

Rent: US\$36/month/sqm(net)

Location: Jianguomenwai Avenue, Chaoyang District. Located in east part of 6Chang'an Avenue, with International Club its west across the street, and the Embassy District to its south.

The Exchange Beijing:

Rent: US\$29.5/month/sqm

Location: Dongsanhuannan Road, Chaoyang District. Located at the intersection of Jianguomenwai Avenue and East Third Ring Road Expressway. Located right above the Guomao Subway Station.

COFCO Plaza:

Rent: US\$43/month/sqm(net)

Location: Jianguomennei Avenue, Dongcheng District. Located in Jianguomennei Ave., facing Chang'an Street and close to Jianguomen and Beijing Railway Station and subway station.

Continental Building:

Rent: US\$18/month/sqm

Location: Gulowai Street, Dongcheng District. Located between North Second Ring Road and North Third Ring Road.

Eagle Run Plaza:

Rent: US\$22-27/month/sqm

Location: Xiaoyun Road, Chaoyang District. It is across the street from the Third Embassy District and close to Lufthansa Center and 10 minutes walk to

bus station at Third Ring Road.

First Shanghai Center:

Rent: US\$26/month/sqm

Location: Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District.

Grand Place:

Rent: US\$26.5/month/sqm

Location: Anli Road, Chaoyang District. In Asian Games Village.

Hyundai Millennium Tower:

Rent: US\$28/month/sqm

Location: Xiaoyun Road, Chaoyang District. Close to the Lufthansa Center and Landmark Towers.

Jing An Center:

Rent: US\$23-27/month/sqm

Location: Zuojiazhuang, Chaoyang District. It is close to Beijing International Exhibition Center, Royal Hotel and Carrefour Supermarket and also near the Third Ring Road.

Lufthansa Center:

Rent: US\$52/month/sqm(net)

Location: Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District. Close to east Third Ring Road.

Pacific Century Place:

Rent: US\$37/month/sqm

Location: Gongtibi Road, Chaoyang District. Close to East Third Ring.

Raycom Infotech Park Tower A:

Rent: US\$25-30/month/sqm (excluding management fee)

Location: Zhongkeyuannan Road, Haidian District.

Towercrest Plaza:

Rent: US\$20-23/month/sqm

Location: Xiaoyun Road, Chaoyang District. The Beijing International Airport is a ten minutes' drive away.

The above information is weekly updated and for reference only. All information provided by DTZ Debenham Tie Leung For further information, please go to www.dtz.com www.dtz.bj.cn Email: residential@dtz.bj.cn

Homehelp

By Wang Yang

Little Swan Home

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Galanz Home Appliance Center

Tel: 68130453

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Appliance Center

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Qisheng Home

Appliance Center

Tel: 85298168

Peony Home Appliance Center

Tel: 66020210

Kelon Home Appliance Center

Tel: 63442986



Pictures by Xie Feng

Pay Attention to Deposit Details

By Wang Yang

Bob Brown wanted to buy a house in Beijing, as he plans to stay here for some time. After looking at different projects over the course of several months, he eventually settled on one in Chaoyang District. In order to secure the apartment, Brown paid the developer a 40,000 yuan deposit.

He paid the deposit in two installments. The first installment was 15,000 yuan, and he was given a receipt saying the money was for the deposit. For the second installment of 25,000 yuan, the receipt said that money was part of the payment (not the deposit), but he did not notice the difference.

Shortly after this, his company unexpectedly transferred him to Japan, and Brown wanted to cancel his purchase of the apartment. But the developer refused to return his money, saying that Brown had broken the contract.

He took the matter to court.

According to the law, when a purchaser breaks the contract, the payment should be returned, but not the deposit. And even the deposit cannot all be kept by the developer.

Brown got the 25,000 yuan back, but the 15,000 yuan was kept by the developer, as he did not specify in the contract how much of the deposit should be returned in the event he didn't go through with the purchase.

Xu Chendi, a lawyer with Beijing Zhongsheng Law Firm, suggests that you should regulate in the purchasing agreement about what happens to the deposit if you cannot buy the house. Usually the developer should not keep all the deposit, and should return most of it back to you, around 80% to 90%. Although Brown was lucky that the developer wrote the receipt out for payment, rather than deposit, he still lost some money.

Total Solution for Business Tyros

By Wang Yang

Traders Hotel's WTO Package offers a suite as accommodation and a fully furnished office complete with secretarial service for new arrivals in Beijing on their business ventures right away.

The deal includes:

Accommodation in Executive/Studio Suite; serviced and furnished office space, complete with direct phone line; complimentary buffet breakfast daily, or your choice of room service; complimentary round-trip airport transfer; free entrance to fitness centers at Traders and

China World Hotels; free international newspaper daily; 20% discount on business center services; 20% discount at Traders Café and Oriental Restaurant; 20% discount on laundry and dry-cleaning and cross-signing privilege at China World and Kerry Center Hotel restaurant outlets.

The price starts from 160 USD plus 15% surcharge and is valid from November 15 2001 until March 15 2002. Reservations must be made prior to arrival, with minimum stay of 15 consecutive nights. Package is subject to availability.



Target: Friendship Hotel

When: 20:30-11:40, Tuesday, Dec. 11th

Hotel Detective: Wang Dandan

Jean Paul, France

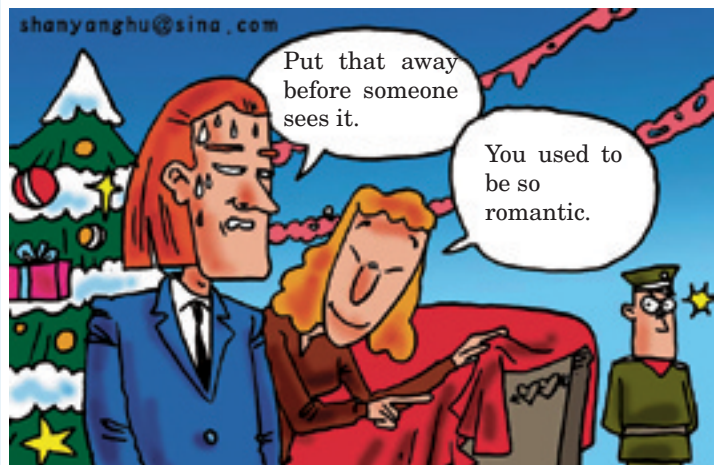
I met my wife here in this hotel. Actually most of the foreigners living here are working for governmental organizations such as CRI or CCTV. I went to dinner on a hot summer day last year, and there was not a vacant individual table, so I just sat beside my wife. We started talking in a very good atmosphere and it was the best dinner I have ever had.

Jacqueline Beth, America

Many overseas experts live here and I like this atmosphere. I am not so accustomed to living in a local community. It is surprising that not many local people live here.

Simon Lee, Hongkong

It is a state-owned hotel and I trust it in terms of security. Nothing could be more important than security for people fresh to the city.



"HOUSING" welcomes your feedback: What kind of difficulties do you encounter when looking for housing in Beijing? What kind of information do you need? What can we help you with? Our E-mail: housing@ynet.com Tel: 65902522 Fax: 65902525

Activities

Brunch with Santa Kids can enjoy a fun-filled brunch with entertainment, games and a Christmas Children's Buffet. **Where:** Cafe California, Harbour Plaza Beijing (北京海逸酒店), 8 Jiangtaixilu, Chaoyang District. **When:** Dec. 16, from 11am. **Admission:** 90 yuan per adult and 38 yuan per child (under 10 years old). **Tel:** 64362288.

Santa Photo Op "Santa and me ...on camera" **Where:** Hotel Lobby, Holiday Inn Lido Beijing (丽都假日饭店), Jiangtailu. **When:** till Dec. 24. **Fee:** 30 yuan per photo. **Tel:** 64376688.



Romantic Ideas Competition Write down the stories you experience or the plan you will practice in future. Four prizes will be awarding for proposing, wedding, romantic wedding commemoration day, and romantic cyber love. **When:** till Feb. **When to declare the result:** after the Valentine Day, Buffet Wine Dinner at Just for You Two (二人世界). **How to take part:** email the creative experience or plan to info@your-bar.com **Tel:** 66174200.

Chinese Culture Club Regular Activities

1) Chinese calligraphy class. A young Chinese calligrapher gives courses to expats. English narration, ink, paper, brush and mat are provided. **Where:** Library Bar. **When:** every Thursday 7-9pm **Fee:** 40 Yuan / per week.

2) Chinese Ink & Water Painting Class. English narration, tools and materials are provided. **Where:** Library Bar, 1F Tower B of East Gate Plaza, right behind the Poly Plaza, Dongsishitiao Subway Station, Dong'erhuanlu. (Opposite Baskin & Robins in the building.) **When:** every Wednesday, 7-9 pm **Fee:** 60 Yuan / per week.

3) Learn Taichi. Suitable for beginner's and intermediate level. **Where:** Bamboo Garden Hotel (竹园宾馆), 24 Xiaoshiqiao Hutong, Jiugulou Dajie, Northwest of the Drum Tower. **When:** every Sunday morning, 10-12am. **Fee:** 60 yuan once. **Tel:** 8462-2081/1350-103-5145 (Feng Cheng).

Fancy Dress Party **Where:** Sweetness, 19 Liangmaqiaolu, Anjialou, east of Lufthansa Center, Chaoyang District. **When:** Dec. 16. **Tel:** 84562899.

Weather

Friday
December 14

Clear to cloudy
Max: 1C. Min: -9C.



Saturday
December 15

Clear to cloudy
Max: 1C. Min: -10C.



Sunday
December 16

Cloudy to clear
Max: 0C. Min: -11C.



Monday
December 17

Clear to overcast
Max: 0C. Min: -11C.



Tuesday
December 18

Clear to cloudy
Max: 0C. Min: -9C.



Wednesday
December 19

Clear to overcast
Max: -1C. Min: -8C.



Thursday
December 20

Overcast to cloudy
Max: -1C. Min: -7C.



We are glad to receive your feedback. If you need any help in your life, you can email us at bjtodayinfo@ynet.com or call 65902522

By Priscilla / Lydia

Music



Popular Classics China Philharmonic Orchestra. Johann Strauss: Overture to Die Fledermaus; Richard Rogers: Sound of Music Suite; Leonard Bernstein: West Side Story Suite; Incidental Music: Star Wars, Romance from The Gadfly, Schindler's List. Folk music: Londonderry Air, Greensleeves, Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon, Silent Night. Ballet Music: Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Nutcracker Suite. Conductor: Yang Yang. **Where:** Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie. **When:** Dec. 24, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-220 yuan. **Tel:** 65001188-5682.

Ciampi Quartet of Duke University M. Ravel: String Quartet in F; Erwin Schulhoff: Five dances for String Quartet: Vienna Waltz, Serenade, Czech Dance, Tango, Tarantella; three Chinese folk songs. **Where:** Beijing Concert Hall, west Chang'an Avenue, west of Capital Cinema. **When:** Dec. 18, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 20-220 yuan. **Tel:** 66057002.

Famous Songs Chorus New Year Concert Symphony Orchestra of Zhanyou Song & Dance Troupe. Conductor: Jiang Xiebin. **Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park. **When:** Dec. 20, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-280 yuan, 500 yuan VIP. **Tel:** 65598285.

Rock Music Ordinance Office, Spring& Autumn, "Wind of God", 920s (Japan), Second-hand Rose. **When:** Dec. 15. **TooKoo underground album debut**, TooKoo, CMCB, Twisted Machine play live. **When:** Dec. 21. "Revival of the Heavy God" album release, featuring 12 Chinese heavy metal bands. **When:** Dec. 22. **Where:** Get Lucky (豪运酒吧) Taiyangonglu, east of south gate of University of International Business and Economics. **Tel:** 64299109.



Red Poppy Concert Established in 1999, the Red Poppy Percussion Orchestra is composed of young girls between 18 and 23 and has performed nearly 100 times at home and abroad. Highlights include the 2001 CCTV Chinese New Year Evening Show and the 21st World Universiade Closing

Performance. This concert will deliver a series of newly composed pieces, including Mountain Drum, Fire of the Youth, Sea, Noisy World, Love in Tokyo and more, combining new music with folk music. There will be no host or break in this concert, so the audience can appreciate the music without being interrupted. **Where:** Guangbo Theater (广播剧场), inside the east gate of Central People's Broadcast Station, 2 Fuxingmenwai Dajie. **When:** Dec. 27, 28. **Admission:** 38-88 yuan. **Tel:** 65079704, 65079556.



Christmas Concerts Christmas Songs & Broadway Dance Night **When:** Dec. 23, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-260 yuan. **Christmas Eve World Classics Concert** **When:** Dec. 24, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 30-180 yuan. **Where:** National Library Concert Hall, 33 Zhongguancun Nandajie, Haidian District. **Tel:** 88455501, 68419220.

Yaoshi-Ziyue Band Singer & bass, Qiu Ye; Guitar, Wen Lin; Keyboard, Zhou Fei; Drums, Lu Xun. **Where:** Sweetness, 19 Anjialou, Chaoyang District, turn left at the first intersection east of the Lufthansa Center. **When:** Dec. 21. **Tel:** 84562899.

New "Old" Place for Live Music Once the jazz standard in Beijing; now devoted to underground music. Every Thursday a new band. **Where:** CD Cafe, south of Agriculture Exhibition Center, east third ring road, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 65018877 ext 3032.

Exhibitions

Shu Feng Ink & Wash Paintings Taiwanese artist; Review of Heilongjiang's Art; The Magic of Chinese Characters - Zhu Ming's Calligraphy Art Exhibition. **Where:** National Library of Fine Arts, 1 Wusidajie, Dongcheng District. **When:** Dec. 18-23. **Admission:** 4 yuan **Tel:** 64016234.

Review of 2001's Elite Exhibition Over 70 works selected from the exhibitions of 2001, mainly Chinese traditional paintings, etchings, ink & wash and oil paintings. **Where:** Huangshicheng Gallery, 136 Nanchizi Dajie, Dongcheng District. **When:** Dec. 16-30, 9am-5pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65212646.

Small Oil Paintings Elite Exhibition **When:** Dec. 15-Jan. 15, 9am-6pm, closed on Mon. **Where:** 3F, Beijing East Gallery. **Standing Exhibition of Oil Paintings** **When:** throughout the year, close on Mon. **Where:** 4F, Beijing East Gallery, Deshengmen Watchtower, Bei'erhuanlu, Xicheng District. **Admission:** 2 yuan. **Tel:** 82014962.

East Meets West Represented artists of Creation Gallery Han Shuli, Xiao Shunzhi, Liu Xuezhai, Tong Shuai and more. The kaleidoscope of colors shown in this exhibition will add some flavor to this gray winter



in Beijing. **Where:** Creation Gallery, north end of Ritan Donglu, Chaoyang District, by the northeast corner of Ritan Park. **When:** Dec. 22-31, 10am-7pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 65067570.

Paintings for X'mas Young artists present paintings full of energy to welcome the upcoming Christmas season. You may also choose one or two pieces as your X'mas gifts



to friends and relatives. **Where:** Creation Galley, Ritandonglu. North of the end, Chaoyang District. **When:** till the end of Dec., 10am-7pm. **Tel:** 65067570.

Red Sandalwood Museum This is the best place to see exquisitely carved sandalwood and learn the history of the craft over the last few hundred years. **Where:** Xinglongxijie, Gaobeidian (高碑店), Chaoyang District. **When:** 9am-5pm, closed on Mon. **Admission:** 20 yuan. **Tel:** 85752818.

Guanghantang Furniture Museum Courtyard museum of ancient Chinese classical furniture set to the sound of traditional music. **Where:** Nangaolu (南泉路), Dashanzidonglu (大山东路) Chaoyang District. Available for parties. **When:** 9am-6pm. **Tel:** 84567963/5

Sports Museum Exhibition rooms for ancient and modern sports, with special exhibits on the Olympics. The first museum of its kind in China. **Where:** 3A, Andinglu, Chaoyang District. **When:** 8:30am-4:30pm. **Admission:** 5 yuan. **Tel:** 64912233 ext 497.



Dining Out

Secrets in Red Capital Club Restaurant Located in an ancient quadrangle with a mysterious atmosphere. Much of the furniture used to belong to former national leaders. Chairman Mao's favorite blunt-snout bream is here, plus fan-shaped bamboo shoots beloved of Zhou

Enlai and Deng Xiaoping when they studied in France. **Where:** 66 Dongsijiutiao Hutong, Dongcheng District, bus 701, 115, 118 and 24 minibus to Dongsishitiao. Book in advance. **Average price:** 120-200 yuan / person. **Open:** 6pm-11pm. **Tel:** 64027150.

Movies

Italian Movies Dec. 15, 7pm- Francesco, *Giullare di Dio* Dec. 22, 7pm - *India Senza Limiti* All directed by Roberto Rossellini **Where:** Space for Imagination Coffee Shop, 5 Xiwangzhuang Xiaoqu, Haidian District (take bus 355 to Shuangqinglu). **Admission:** 5 yuan. **Tel:** 62791280.

Korean Movies *Peppermint Candy* Directed by Lee Chang Dong, starring Sui Kyung Gu, Mun So Ry. **Where:** 5F, Hyundai Millennium Tower (现代盛世大厦), 38 Xiaoyunlu, Chaoyang District. **When:** Dec. 21, 5:30pm. **Admission:** free. **Tel:** 84538112-4.



Performances

Pear Flowers The Xiao Bai Hua (Little Hundred Flower) Yueju Troupe from Hangzhou, the capital of Zhejiang province. **Where:** China Children's Theater, 64 Dong'anmen Dajie, Dongcheng District. Take bus 103, 104 108 to Dong'anshichang. **When:** Dec. 19, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 50-200 yuan. **Tel:** 65121425.

Green Rhythm The famous dancer from Canada will give a performance combining western

and eastern style, and fusing traditional and modern elements. **Where:** Beijing Exhibition Center Theater, west of Beijing Zoo. **When:** Dec. 15 and 16, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 50-500 yuan. **Tel:** 68354455.

Ballet Classics Evening Party Central Ballet Troupe. **Where:** Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, bus 113, 115 to Dongsishitiao. **When:** Dec. 17, 7:30pm. **Admission:** 180-380 yuan. **Tel:** 65001188-5682.

Cui Hua, Serve the Pickled Chinese Cabbage With a name drawn from a popular song composed and sung by Xue Cun, this is an amusing piece to celebrate Christmas and the New Year. Directed by Tian Youliang, Art director in chief, Zhang Guangtian, starring Qiao Yuyan, Shi Zhan, Su Zilong, Wang Yuning, with guest performers Xue Cun and Yang Ting. **Where:** Mini Theater of China Youth Art Theater, **When:** Dec. 21-Jan. 4. **Admission:** 80 yuan, 40 yuan for students. **Tel:** 65596575.



Groceries

Christmas is coming! To make a great festive feast, check out the following stores for the necessary ingredients:

Friendship Store Grocery at east end, beside Starbucks **Add:** 17 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District. **Open:** 9am-9pm. **Tel:** 65003311.

Lufthansa Center **Add:** -1F, Dongsanhuanlu. **Open:** 9am-10pm. **Tel:** 64651188.

China World Trade Center Groceries at east entrance, -1F. **Add:** 1 Jianguomenwai Dajie. **Open:** 9am-9pm. **Tel:** 65052288.

Price Smart Members only **Add:** 18A, Xueqinglu (学清路) Haidian District. **Open:** 9am-9pm. **Tel:** 62927004-5.

Jenny Lou's Turkeys cost 39

yuan/kg. **Add:** 50 meters south of the west gate of Chaoyang Park, across from Green Lake Apartments. **Tel:** 65016249.

Charlotte's Butchery and Delicatessen Turkeys imported from USA, hams, cookies, chocolates and bread. Also sells gingerbread, gluhwein. Turkeys cost 50 yuan/kg. **Add:** 1 Nongzhan Nanlu, south of the west gate of Chaoyang Park. **Open:** 10am-8pm. **Tel:** 65083884, 13910620298 (Ms.Wu)

Lido Market Turkeys imported from USA, priced 78 yuan/kg for raw turkey, 98 yuan for cooked. **Add:** east entrance, Lido Holiday Inn, Jiangtailu (蒋台路), Chaoyang District. **Open:** 9am-9pm. **Tel:** 64376688-1542.

Sports

Squash Court Options **Beijing Kempinski Hotel Health Center** The best-equipped place in Beijing for squash. Three courts. Liangmaqiaolu, opposite of Beijing Lufthansa Friendship Shopping Mall. 7am-9pm. 85 yuan/45 mins. **Tel:** 64653388.

Beijing Yifangyuan (颐方园) Sports Center Possessing two imported professional courts. A little bit expensive. A12 Chengshousilu, Fengtai District. 6am-12 midnight. **Price:** 6am-10am (100 yuan/hr), 10am-5pm (120/hr), 5pm-10pm (150/hr), 10pm-12 midnight (120/hr), holiday and weekend (150/hr). **Tel:** 67686008.

Beijing Hilton Health Club Many skilled squash players often come here. Only one court. 1 Dongfanglu, Dongsanhuaileu, Chaoyang District. 6am-10pm. 60 yuan/hr. **Tel:** 64662288 ext 7478.

Beijing Shangri-la Hotel Sports Center Convenient for people living in the west of Beijing. One court. 29 Zizhuyuanlu, Haidian District. 9am-11pm. 60 yuan/hr. **Tel:** 68412211.

Xidan Cultural Center Plaza Squash first, shopping after. Two courts. B3, Xidan Cultural Center Plaza, bus 1, 4, 57 or subway to Xidan. 2 fields. 9:30am-9:30pm. 80 yuan/hr. **Tel:** 66063273.

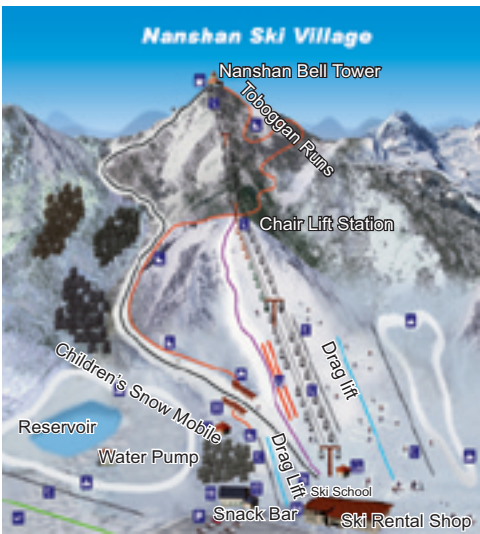
Beijing Guodu (国都) Squash Center Traveling squash fans often choose this one as it's convenient for the airport. One court. Xiaotianzhu, Airport Expressway. 100 yuan/hr including shower and sauna. 6am-8:30pm. **Tel:** 64565588 ext 1217.



Horseback Riding **Beijing Green Equestrian Club** Beautiful scenery, super track, excellent equestrian training. 180 yuan/hr. **Where:** north bank of Wenyu River (温榆河), 1 km east from Lijing Garden Villa, Jichangfulu (机场辅路), Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 64577166.

Countryside Hours Racing Club Not strictly international-class racing standard, but it's a good show and there's betting on every race. **Where:** Mapo Village, Shunyi County. **Open:** 6am-7pm. **Tel:** for more info contact at 69403038/9.

Calling All Football Fans From World Cup Qualifiers to the English Premiership, UEFA Champions League to the Spanish Primera - we've got it all! Watch out for some rugby coming up soon on the 15th & 16th!! Saturday, 10pm English Premiership preview; 10:50pm English Premiership match. Sunday, 9:50pm English Premiership Leeds vs Leicester City; 12 midnight, English Premiership Chelsea vs Liverpool. All live! **Where:** ClubFootball Centre, 10 Taipingzhuang, beside Red House Hotel, Chunxiulu, Dongzhimenwai Dajie, Chaoyang District. **Tel:** 64150988/64167786.



Nanshan Ski Village

By Jiang Zhong

Nanshan (南山) boasts four runs for skiers of various abilities. The most difficult run is 1,500 meters long and the province of skillful skiers. Flying downhill from the summit, they race past the apricot, cherry and the apple orchards; the intermediate run is 550 meters long; and the beginners’



level 350 meters long.

The double-chair lift can take you directly to the starting point of the difficult run at the summit of Nanshan Mountain in eight minutes; the intermediate level takes four minutes to reach. The beginners’ run has three draglifts, which are extremely useful when the novices are worn out.

The village has China’s first international-standard snowboard facilities. Kids can enjoy snowmobiles and sledding, and can also play on the Toboggan Run.

Visitors are guaranteed enough snow for skiing. Powerful snow machines keep the thickness of the snow layer above 50 centimeters (19.5 inches) during the season, which lasts until March 31. The ski school here features some 20 experienced coaches.

You can rent a pair of skis in the rental shop at the mountain foot. 2,000 pairs of skis are available here, including 500 for kids.

Where: Shengshuitou (圣水头) Village, Henanzhai (河南寨) Town, Miyun County.

How to get there: Buses from Dongzhimen to the Ski Village run every 10 minutes.

Ski tariffs: 50 yuan per hour on weekdays, 70 yuan on weekends and holidays, 90 yuan for two hours on weekdays, 120 yuan on weekends and



holidays, 120 yuan for half a day on weekdays, 180 yuan on weekends and holidays, 200 yuan for a day on weekdays, 320 yuan on weekends and holidays, 20-visit coupon: 1,800 yuan.

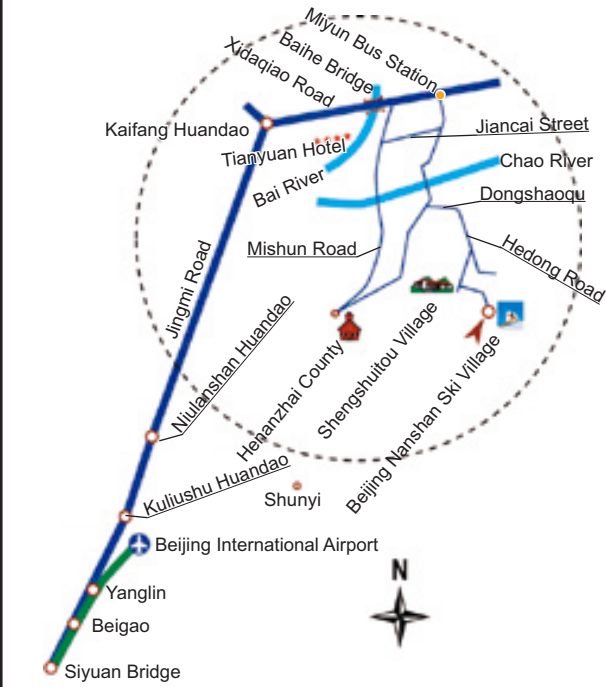
Ski school fees:

Two hours: 100 yuan per person, 160 yuan for 2-3 persons, 180 yuan for 4-8 persons; Half a day: 160 yuan per person, 240 yuan for 2-3 persons, 300 yuan for 4-8 persons; One day: 240 yuan per person, 300 yuan for 2-3 person, 360 yuan for 4-8 person.

Rentals:

Clothing: 30 yuan; Snowmobile: 8 yuan per minute; Sledding: 50 yuan for half an hour, 80 yuan for an hour; Toboggan: 40 yuan per person; Double chair lift: 10 yuan per person; DIY tools: 20 yuan per pack; Ski gear maintenance: 60-100 yuan

Admittance: 20 yuan



Thousands of cars skated along streets clad in heavy snow in Beijing last Friday. Drivers slalomed off bridges and slid across intersections. Giving up on motorized transport, a friend and I walked home, watching cars collide every 10 minutes or so. My friend looked at his watch and said, “If I had skis I could have had dinner two hours earlier.”

It’s skiing season in Beijing, and not just for vehicles with bald tires. The municipality has a number of large skiing villages, and the biggest and (they say) best opens on December 22 at Nanshan, north of the city proper.



Ski the Slopes

Other ski resorts in Beijing

Shijinglong (石京龙) Ski Resort

Complicated terrain and broad trails here offer an ideal location for skiing. The trails are lined with trees on both sides. The red roofs and white snow present skiers with a fantastic view. Thickness of the snow layer varies between 11.7 inches and 39 inches. Double chair lift can lift up to 450 skiers to the summit in one hour. Beginners’ run features two draglifts.

The central run is 600 meters long, 80 meters wide and 14-19 degrees in gradient.

How to get there:

Bus 919 from Deshengmen to Yanqing, then bus 920 to Huangbaisi (黄柏寺), finally walk one kilometer westward.

OR take Badaling Expressway to Yanqing, then turn toward Longqingxia and finally turn west at Huangbaisi.

Admittance: 20 yuan

Ski tariff: 90 yuan per hour, 200 yuan for half a day and 400 yuan for one day (rentals of ski gears and clothing included)

Rentals:

Snowmobile: 20 yuan per circle and 450 yuan per hour, Ski bicycle: 80 yuan per hour, 200 yuan for half a day and 400 yuan for one day, Skis and snowboard: 100 yuan per hour, 200 yuan for half a day and 400 yuan for one day.

Snacks: 25 yuan

Contact: Zhao Zhihua, 69191617.

Xueshijie (雪世界 Snow World)

This ski village is open 270 days a year. Xueshijie is more suitable for beginners’ training. Snowmobile, dog and horse driven sledges, coaches and rental shop are available here.

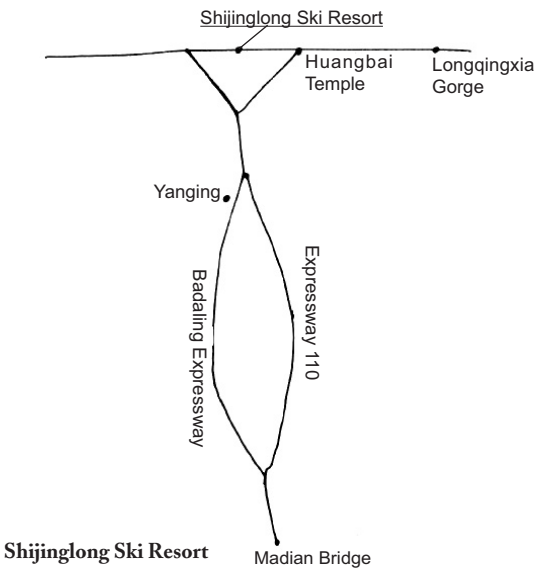
Chinese and western restaurants can be found nearby. Some companies and families have chosen this ski village for ceremonies and tourism.

Where: Xiaogongmen (小宫门), Shisanling Town (十三陵镇), Changping County, Beijing

How to get there: bus 345 from Deshengmen to (政法大学), then bus 3 on the other side of the road to Xueshijie OR take Badaling Expressway till exit 13A, turn north at Changpinghuandao, then turn left at Qinlingyuan.

Admittance: 10 yuan

Ski tariff: 80 yuan for one hour, 150 yuan for two hours, 198 yuan for half a day and 360 yuan for one day (rentals included).



Where to buy Ski gear and clothing

It is not necessary to buy ski gear or clothing before going to any of the skiing location mentioned above. However, if you want to equip yourself, only a few stores in Beijing can help, and only Sunwind and Kanasi sell a full range of ski equipment.

Sunwind (桑温特) Outdoor Equipment

Where: 71, Xisanhuan Beilu, Haidian District (100 meters southwest to Zizhuyuan. **Contact:** 68714716.

Kanasi (喀纳斯) Sporting Company

Where: 20, Chengfu Lu, Haidian District (at the newly built south gate of Beijing Language and Culture University). **Contact:** 62347271.

Ozark also provides ski clothing and accessories. You can find Ozark counters in many large department stores in Beijing, such as Xidan Department Store, Shuang’an Market, Modern Plaza, Huamao Building of Urban and Rural Trade Center and Parkson Plaza. **Contact:** 67113904.

You can also buy ski clothing in Silk Market, where some of the stalls can tailor ski clothing to your size.

Ski trails around North China

Cuiyunshan (翠云山) Ski Village

Average temperature around this ski village in winter is 15 centigrade below zero, and strong winds occur seldom. Average thickness of the snow layer is around 39 inches. The skiing season here lasts five months (from November to March). Six runs are available, and three draglifts supply access to the summit.

Where: Northeast of Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province.

How to get there: train from Yongdingmen to Zhangjiakou (15 yuan), then bus to Cuiyunshan (20 yuan).

Admittance: 30 yuan per person.

Ski tariff: 100 yuan for two hours. **Rentals:** 25 yuan for ski clothing and gloves.

Mulanweichang (木兰围场) Ski Village

Mulanweichang used

to be an imperial summer resort. An average 1,600 meters above sea level, it features typical climate and views of North China, cool and humid in summer, while cold and dry in winter. It is also a national forest park. Skiing through forests is an unforgettable experience.

Where: Saihanba (塞罕坝) National Forest Park, Chengde, Hebei Province.

Admittance: 25 yuan per person.

Ski tariff: 50 yuan for one hour; 150 yuan for half a day; 220 yuan for one day (rentals for skiing gears and draglift included).



Saibei (塞北) Ski Village

Forest coverage of this area amounts to 60 percent, featuring broad and gently sloping terrain. Ski season lasts 120 days a year.

Runs of different levels of difficulty adding up to a total length of 7,000 meters are available here. Skiers can ski around the clock on all the runs. Ski jumping is also available. This ski village supplies professional runs for athletes’ training in summer and winter. All facilities within the ski village were built to meet world tournament standards.

Where: Chongli (崇礼) County, Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province.

How to get there: train T667 from Beijing South Railway Station or bus from Xizhimen to Zhangjiakou (four hours), then bus or taxi to the ski village.

Admittance: 30 yuan.

Ski tariff: 60 for one hour, 110 two hours, 150 half a day and 300 yuan one day. **Rentals:** Children’s sledding: 25 for one hour; Ski clothing: 30 yuan for half a day and 50 yuan one day; Ski shades: 10 yuan for one day; Snowmobile: 20 yuan for one circuit and 500 yuan for one hour; Coaches: 100-150 yuan for one hour.



Yabuli (亚布力) — “The most professional ski resort”

Yabuli was the location of the 1996 Asian Winter Games. Featuring eleven trails running over 40 kilometers, it also includes a cross-country run. Three double-chair lifts, three draglifts and three single-chair lifts are available.

Besides skiing you can find many other interesting thing in this famous resort. The Windmill Lodge, for example, is a Dutch-style complex.

Where: Yabuli, Shangzhi (尚志) City, Heilongjiang Province

How to get there: flight XW 127 or train T17 to Harbin (departs Beijing at 6:20pm and get to Harbin at 7:18am, hard seat 158 yuan, hard sleeper 290 yuan), then bus to Yabuli (50 yuan, 3 hours).

Ski tariff: 408 yuan for two days (including admittance, accommodation, dinners, skiing, chair lifts and service).

Rentals: Ski gear: 200 yuan for half a day, 330 yuan for one day; Ski clothing: 50 yuan for half a day, 70 yuan for one day; Snowmobile: 60 yuan for ten minutes; Archery: 40 yuan for ten arrows; Toboggan run: 100 yuan. Rentals between December 31 and January 2 will be 30% higher.

Erlongshan (二龙山) Ski Resort — “Skiing for the masses”

The designers have highlighted the tourism function of this ski resort. The trails were built on very gentle slopes, and were broadened to guarantee enhanced security. Two thousand skiers can ski simultaneously on all eight trails. Erlongshan is an ideal setting for easy holiday, but might not be suitable for skiing adventurers.

Where: Erlongshan Scenic Spot, 50 kilometers east of Harbin. **How to get there:** flight XW 127 or train T17 to Harbin, then bus to Erlongshan.

Ski tariff: 50 yuan for one hour, 150 yuan for half a day and 220 yuan for one day. **Rentals:** Ski gear: 230 yuan for half a day and 350 yuan for one day. **Accommodation:** 238 yuan for a room for two, 168 yuan for a room for four, 2,400 yuan for a villa for 11 and 6,600 yuan for a villa for 30.



Beidahu (北大湖) — Olympic village

Beidahu features all the professional facilities that can be found in a modern Winter Olympics, because it is one of the national team’s training bases. A shooting range for biathlon is also available.

Where: Songhuahu Scenic Spot, Yongji County, Jilin Province. **How to get there:** train 571 from Beijing to Jilin, then bus to the ski resort. The train departs Beijing at 2:34 pm daily, and gets to Jilin at 6:35am the next morning.

Admittance: 5 yuan.

Rentals: Ski clothing: 30 yuan for half a day, 50 yuan for one day; Gloves or shades: 5 yuan for half a day and 10 yuan for one day.